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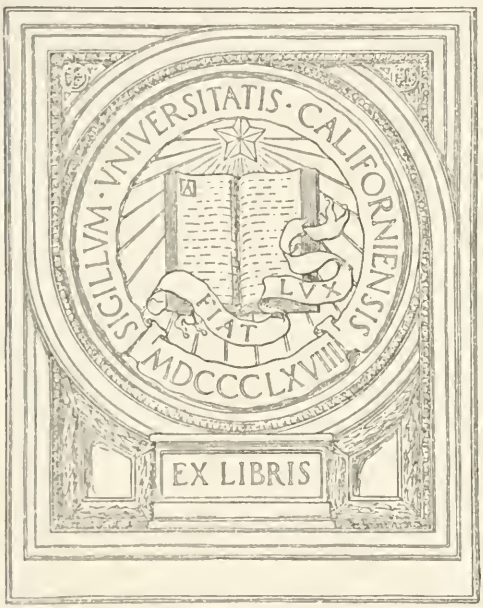

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GEORGE EBERS.

The Burgomaster's Wife

A ROMANCE

By GEORGE EBERS

Author of
"An Egyptian Princess," "Uarda," "The Bride of the Nile,"
"Homo Sum," etc.

Translated by
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PREFACE.

BARONESS SOPHIE VON BRANDENSTEIN,

NÉE EBERS.

Why I should dedicate to you, the only sister of my dead father, a book and this book, of all others, needs no words of explanation from me to you. From my earliest recollection you have been a dear and true friend to me, and you surely have not forgotten how, as your guest seventeen years ago, I was busily employed in getting together the material that forms the basis of "The Burgomaster's Wife." You took a friendly interest in many an item that seemed to me worthy of notice, curious, or amusing, and when the demands of a serious profession hindered me from pursuing in the old way the pleasant study of the history of Holland, the home of my mother, you never wearied in urging me to return to the unused material that had formerly aroused your interest.

At last I have been permitted to give this material, so long laid aside, its rightful due. A noble

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period in the glorious history of Holland is now the prop about which cling the tendrils of my story. You have seen them grow and for this reason you will regard them with pleasure and indulgence.

In love and friendship,

Yours as always,

GEORG EBERS.

LEIPZIG, October 30, 1881.

THE BURGOMASTER'S WIFE.

CHAPTER I.

In the year of our Lord 1574, spring had made an early and joyous entry into the Netherlands.

The sky was blue, insects darted hither and thither in the sunshine, white butterflies balanced themselves on the newly opened flowers, and beside one of the many canals which intersected the wide plain stood a stork which snapped at a solemn frog; the poor fellow struggled in the red beak of his enemy. A gulp—the agile leaper disappeared and his murderer spread his wings and soared away. Over broad gardens and more modest ones filled with blossoming fruit trees, flower-beds set out with dainty exactness, and gayly painted arbors, over the somber crown of encircling fortresses and towers, over narrow houses with tall painted gables, over tidy streets along whose borders elms, poplars, lindens, and willows were taking on the fresh, green livery of spring—on sped the bird. At last he alighted on a tiled roof. Here on the ridgepole stood his nest, well secured. When he had generously handed over his captive to his brooding mate, he balanced himself on his right leg and gazed thoughtfully down upon the town of dazzling red brick, which rose beneath him on the green carpeted

meadows. He had known for many years his beautiful Leyden, the pride of Holland.

He was familiar with every arm and armlet of the Rhine that separated the stately city into countless islands, and over which arched as many stone bridges as there are days in five months of the year; but truly, many things had changed since his last flight to the south.

Where were the burghers' gayly painted summer houses and orchards, where were the wooden frames upon which the weavers were wont to stretch their somber and many-colored cloths?

Whatever work of human hands, whatever vegetation had once risen breast high outside the city walls and towers, breaking the uniformity of the plain, all had vanished from the earth, and, beyond, on the bird's best hunting grounds could be seen brown and blackened circles in the green of the meadows.

On the last of October of the previous year, shortly after the storks' departure, a Spanish army had set up its camp on this spot, and on the first day of spring, a few hours before the home-coming of the feathered wanderers, the besiegers had gone away, having accomplished nothing.

Like a blight in the midst of the luxurious growth could be seen their place of encampment, the blackened embers of their fires.

The sorely pressed burghers of the rescued city gave a sigh of thankfulness. The industrious, easy-going folk had soon forgotten the sufferings they had endured, for early spring is so fair, and never does existence seem so precious as when the delights of spring surround us.

A new and happier time seemed to have begun, not only for nature but for man as well. The soldiers who had been quartered in the beleaguered

town, and had raised many disturbances, had taken their departure two days before with song and music. The carpenter's ax glittered in the spring sunshine before the red walls, gates, and towers, and cut sharply into the beams out of which new scaffoldings and frames were to be put together; cattle grazed peacefully and unafraid outside the town; in the devastated gardens digging, sowing and planting was busily going on. In streets and houses thousands of hands that had lately borne pikes and arquebuses upon the walls and towers were turned to useful labors, and the old people sat quietly at the doors and warmed their backs in the sunshine of the warm spring day.

On this eighteenth of April, few discontented faces were to be seen in the streets of Leyden. Of impatient faces, however, there was no lack, and whoever wished to find them had only to go to the high school where noon recess was approaching and where many boys were looking with much more eagerness out of the open windows of the schoolroom than at the teacher's face.

Only in that part of the spacious hall where the larger boys were gathered was no uneasiness noticeable. The spring sunshine shone on *their* books also, spring was also calling to them, but the words to which they were listening seemed to have a more powerful influence upon their young minds than spring's alluring voice.

Forty shining eyes were fastened upon the bearded face of the man who was speaking to them in deep tones.

Even unruly Jan Mulder had dropped the knife with which he had begun to carve on his desk a striking likeness of a ham, and was listening intently.

The noon bell sounded from the neighboring church of St. Peter's, and shortly after, from the

tower of the Rathhaus; the small boys left the room noisily, but—strange to say—the patience of the larger ones still held out; they could not be listening to things that were a part of the lesson.

The man who stood before them was not the teacher but the clerk of the council, Van Hout, who was to-day taking the place of his sick friend, Vestroot, master of arts and preacher. During the ringing of the bells he had closed the book and now said:

"*Suspendo lectionem.* Heh, Jan Mulder, how would you translate *suspendere?*"

"Hang," answered the lad.

"Hang!" laughed Van Hout. "Hang you, perhaps, by the heels, but where can one hang a lesson? Adrian van der Werff——"

The lad addressed rose quickly, and said:

"*Suspendere lectionem* means to end the lesson."

"Good; and if we were going to hang Jan Mulder, what would we call it?"

"*Patibulare—ad patibulum!*" shouted the scholars together.

Van Hout's face, which had just been smiling, grew grave. He sighed and said:

"*Patibulo* is a bad Latin word, and your fathers, who used to sit here, did not understand its meaning as well as you do. Now every child in the Netherlands knows it, for Alva has impressed it upon us. More than eighteen thousand brave burghers have gone to the gallows through his *ad patibulum!*"

So saying he drew his short black doublet through his girdle, stepped nearer to the foremost desks, bent his sturdy body forward, and said with ever increasing emotion:

"This is enough for to-day, boys. It will not matter much if you forget the names that you have learned here to-day. But keep one thing in mind:

The fatherland above everything! Leonidas and his three hundred Spartans have not died in vain as long as there are men who are ready to follow their example. Your turn will also come. I am not here to boast, but what is true is true. We Hollanders have offered up fifty times three hundred martyrs for the freedom of our native land. Strong men are always found in stormy times; boys, too, have stood the test. Ulrich, there at your head, may bear his nickname of *Löwing* with honor! 'Ho Persians—ho Greeks!' it used to be—but we shout: 'Ho Netherlands and ho Spain!' And truly the proud Darius never raged through Hellas as King Philip has through Holland. Yes, boys, many flowers grow in the human breast. Among them is hatred, the poisonous hemlock. Spain has sown it in our breasts, I can feel it growing within me and you feel it too, and ought to feel it. But do not misunderstand me! 'Ho Spain—ho Netherlands!' is the cry and not: 'Ho Papists and ho Reformers!' Every creed is good in God's sight, as long as men earnestly strive to walk in Christ's footsteps. Before God's throne, the question will not be: Papist, Calvinist, or Lutheran? but: What were your thoughts and what were yonr deeds? Respect every man's belief; but whosoever makes common cause with the tyrant against the freedom of the Fatherland, him you may despise. Now pray silently. There And now go home!"

The scholars rose; Van Hout wiped the perspiration from his high forehead, and while the boys gathered together their books, pens and pencils, he said hesitatingly and as though he must make excuses to himself for what he had just said:

"What I have been saying to you may not belong to the schoolroom; but, boys, the struggle is very far from being at an end, and although you may

have to sit on the school-bench awhile longer, you too will be soldiers in the future. Löwing, you may remain behind. I have something to say to you."

The master turned slowly away from the boys, and the latter rushed out into the open. In a corner of the yard of St. Peter's, which lay behind the church and was disturbed by few of the passers-by, they halted and their confused shouts resolved themselves into a sort of consultation with which the urgent strains of the organ from within the church mingled strangely.

They were discussing the game they were to play that afternoon.

That it should be a battle was understood, after Van Hout's speech. It had not been proposed by any one, but was the supposition upon which the discussion that followed was based.

It was soon decided that patriots and Spaniards, not Greeks and Persians, were to enter the lists against each other; but when the burgomaster's fourteen-year-old son, Adrian van der Werff, proposed the immediate formation of the parties, and, in his imperious way, attempted to make Spaniards of Paul van Swieten and Klaus Dirkson, he met with violent opposition, and the serious state of affairs was revealed that no one could be induced to impersonate a foreign soldier. Each boy wished to make a Castilian of some one else and fight himself under the banner of the Netherlands. But friend and foe are necessary for a war, and Holland's heroic spirit required Spaniards in order to prove itself. The youthful tempers began to kindle and the cheeks of the combatants to glow, here and there a fist was raised, and everything indicated that the battle with the country's foe was to be preceded by a hideous civil war.

Indeed, these spirited boys were ill-fitted to play the part of King Philip's somber, stiff-necked soldiers. Among the yellow-haired lads few with brown locks were to be seen; and but one with black hair and dark eyes. This was Adam Baersdorp, whose father, like Van der Werff's, was among the leaders of the burghers. When he, too, refused to play the part of a Spaniard, one of the boys cried:

"You won't? And yet my father says that yours is half a Glipper* and altogether a Papist."

At these words young Baersdorp flung down his books and advanced with clinched fists upon his opponent. Adrian van der Werff, however, stepped hastily between the combatants.

"For shame, Cornelius!" he cried. "If any one speaks like that again, I'll shut his mouth. Catholics are Christians as well as we are. You heard the clerk of the council say so, and my father says so too. Will you be a Spaniard, Adam—yes or no?"

"No!" cried the latter resolutely. "And if any one——"

"You can fight afterward," interrupted Adrian van der Werff, and picking up the books that Baersdorp had flung down and good-naturedly handing them to him, he went on: "I will be a Spaniard to-day. Who else?"

"I, I, I too," cried several of the schoolboys, and the forming of the two parties would have proceeded in the best of order, had not the attention of the boys been diverted from their purpose by something new.

A young gentleman followed by a black servant was coming up the street, and in their direction.

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* A name given to Spanish sympathizers in Holland.

He was also a Netherlander, but he had little in common with the schoolboys but age; a pink and and white complexion, fair hair, and clear, blue eyes that looked arrogantly out upon the world.

His every step showed that he considered himself something out of the common, and the gaudily dressed young Moor, who carried several newly made purchases, bore himself in comical imitation of his master. The negro's head was thrown even further back than his master's, who was prevented by a stiff Spanish ruff from carrying his handsome head as freely as other mortals.

"That coxcomb of a Wibisma," said one of the schoolboys, pointing with his finger at the approaching youth.

The eyes of all the boys turned toward the latter, and scornfully surveyed his small velvet hat, adorned with a feather, his quilted doublet of red satin padded over the chest and arms, the wide puffs of his short brown breeches, and the brilliant scarlet of the silken hose that fitted snugly to his shapely legs.

"The coxcomb," repeated Paul van Swieten. "He's a cardinalist,* that's why he goes about in red."

"And like a Spaniard, as though he had just came from Madrid," cried a second lad, and a third added:

"The Wibismas took good care to stay away as long as bread was scarce with us."

"All the Wibismas are Glippers."

"And now he's strutting around on a week-day in silk and satin," said Adrian. "Just look at the blackamoor the red-legged stork has brought with him to Leyden."

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* An adherent of Cardinal Granville.

The schoolboys raised a loud laugh, and when the young noble came up to them, Paul van Swieten drawled through his nose:

"How do you like running away? How are things going in Spain, Herr Glipper?"

The boy flung back his head still further; the negro behind him did the same, and both went quietly on, even when Adrian shouted in his ear:

"*Glipperchen*, tell me how many pieces of silver did Judas sell the Master for?"

Young Matenesse van Wibisma made an impatient motion, but controlled himself until Jan Mulder stepped before him, and holding his small cloth cap decorated with a cock's feather under the other's chin, said humbly, as if begging:

"Give me a groschen to buy absolution for our cat, Herr Grandee; he stole a leg of veal from the butcher yesterday."

"Out of my way!" said the lad haughtily and sternly, and strove to push Mulder aside with the back of his hand.

"Hands off, Glipper!" cried the schoolboy threateningly, raising his fist.

"Then let me alone," answered Wibisma. "I seek no quarrel, and last of all with you."

"And why not with us?" asked Adrian van der Werff, angered by the cool and arrogant tone of the last words.

The lad shrugged his shoulders disdainfully. Adrian went on:

"Because you like your Spanish dress better than our doublets of Leyden cloth."

Adrian said no more, for Jan Mulder had crept behind the newcomer and struck at his hat with a book; and while Nicolas van Wibisma was striving to free his eyes from the head covering, shouted:

"There, Herr Grandee, the hat is on firmly now. You can keep it on, even before the king."

The negro could not spring to his master's aid, for his arms were filled with bundles, nor did the young nobleman call to him, for he knew how cowardly his black servant was and he felt strong enough to defend himself.

An ostrich plume was fastened to his hat by a costly clasp, a gift that he had lately received on his seventeenth birthday, but he paid no heed to it, flung his hat aside placed himself in fighting position, and with flushed cheeks demanded in a loud and imperious voice:

"Who did that?"

Jan Mulder had slipped back among his comrades, and instead of stepping forward and proclaiming himself, he cried, laughing:

"Look for the hat-smasher, Glipper! Let us play blind-man's buff."

The lad, beside himself with rage, repeated his question more imperatively.

When instead of answering, the schoolboys entered into Jan Mulder's jest and shouted noisily: "Play blind-man's buff! Look for the hat-smasher! You begin, *Glipperchen!*" Nicolas, losing all control of himself, cried furiously to the laughing group:

"You cowardly riff-raff!"

The words had scarcely died away when Paul van Swieten raised his leather-bound grammar and flung it full at Wibisma's breast. Amid loud yells from the boys the grammar was followed by other books, which struck the young noble on the legs and shoulders. Bewildered, and shielding his face with his hands, he fell back toward the wall of the church. There he came to a standstill and prepared to make a rush upon his enemies.

The stiff Spanish ruff no longer confined his handsome, curly head. He looked his antagonists freely and boldly in the face, stretched his young limbs

steeled by many a knightly exercise, and with an unmistakable Netherland curse, rushed upon the boy who stood nearest to him—Adrian van der Werff.

After a short struggle the burgomaster's son, his inferior in age and strength, lay stretched upon the ground; but the other scholars, who had not ceased to cry, "Glipper, Glipper," now laid hands on the young noble, who was kneeling upon his vanquished foe.

Nicolas defended himself bravely, but his enemies were too numerous for him.

Maddened by rage and shame, he drew his dagger from his belt.

The boys raised a terrible outcry and two of them flung themselves upon Nicolas to wrest the weapon from him. They soon succeeded; the dagger fell upon the pavement, but Paul van Swieten sprang back with a cry, for the sharp blade had pierced his arm and the blood was flowing upon the ground.

For several moments the shouts of the boys and the screams of the negro drowned the music that came through the windows of the church. Suddenly the music ceased; instead of the melodious strains, only the plaintive, dying note of a single pipe could be heard, and a young man ran of the door of the sacristy. He rapidly took in the cause of the uproar that had interrupted him in his practicing. His handsome face, framed by a short, full beard, had looked anxious at first, but soon broke into a smile, although the words of reproof and the thrusts with which he pushed aside the angry boys were earnest enough and did not fail in their effect.

The schoolboys knew the musician, Wilhelm Corneliussohn, and made no resistance, for they liked him, and the dozen years' advantage he had

over them rendered his authority indisputable. Not a hand was now raised against the young noble, but the boys surrounded the organist, and, all shouting together, began to accuse Nicolas and defend themselves.

Paul van Swieten's wound was slight. He stood outside the circle of his companions and supported his injured left arm with his right hand. Now and then he blew on the burning wound, which was done up in a handkerchief, but his interest in the result of this entertaining quarrel was stronger than the desire to have his injuries attended to.

When the peacemaker's task was nearly accomplished the injured lad suddenly pointed in the direction of the schoolhouse and called warningly to his companions:

"Here comes Herr von Nordwyk! Let the Glipper go or something will happen!"

Paul van Swieten took his wounded arm in his right hand again and ran quickly around the church. Several other boys followed, but the newcomer, of whom they stood in awe, a young man of thirty, had legs of considerable length and knew how to make good use of them.

"Stop, boys!", he cried in a far-reaching and authoritative voice. "Stop! What's going on here?"

Every one in Leyden held the learned and brave young nobleman in great respect, and so all the boys who had not at once heeded their injured comrade's shout of warning, halted until Herr von Nordwyk came up to them.

A merry light sparkled in the man's keen eyes and a sly smile played about his bearded lips as he called to the musician:

"What has been going on here, Meister Wilhelm? Couldn't the shouts of Minerva's followers be made to

harmonize with your organ playing?—but, by all the colors of the rainbow, if that isn't Nico Matenesse, young Wibisma! And how the young gentleman looks! Brawling in the very shadow of the church —and you here, Adrian, and you too, Meister Wilhelm?"

"I separated them," answered the musician calmly, readjusting his disordered cuffs.

"Quietly, but impressively—as you play the organ," laughed the commandant. "Who began the quarrel? You, young man? or the others?"

What with excitement, shame and anger, Nicolas could find no coherent words. Adrian, however, stepped forward and said: "We have been wrestling together. Don't be too hard on us, Herr Janus."

Nicolas cast a friendly glance at his antagonist.

Herr von Nordwyk, Jan van der Does, or, as he was fond of calling himself, Janus Dousa, was, however, by no means satisfied with this information. "Patience, patience!" he cried, "you look suspicious enough, Meister Adrian; come here and tell me, '*atrekeos*,' according to the truth, what has been going on here?"

The lad obeyed, and told frankly what had happened, without keeping back or excusing anything.

"H'm," said Dousa, when the lad had finished his story. "A bad business. No one is free from blame. Your cause would be the better one if it were not for the knife, my fine young gentleman, but you, Adrian, and you, you round-cheeked rascals—here comes the rector; if he catches you, you will certainly see nothing outside of four walls today. I should be sorry for that."

The round-cheeked rascals, and Adrian with them, understood the hint, and like a flock of doves pursued by a hawk, fled round the church without stopping to take leave.

As soon as they had vanished, the commandant approached young Nicolas and said:

"It's a bad business! But what is fair for them is fair for you. Go home at once. Are you visiting your cousin?"

"Yes, my lord," answered the lad.

"Is your father also in the town?"

The lad was silent.

"He does not wish to be seen?"

Nicolas nodded in affirmation, and Dousa went on:

"Leyden is open to every Hollander, and also to you; but if you go about like one of King Philip's pages, and show contempt for your equals, you, yourself, must bear the consequences. There lies your dagger, my young friend, and there is your hat: pick them up and remember that such a weapon is no plaything. Many a man's whole life has been ruined by a single moment's thoughtless use of one. The superior number of your assailants may excuse you; but how are you to get to your cousin's house in this tattered doublet without disgracing yourself?"

"My cloak is in the church," said the musician. "I will give it to the young gentleman."

"Well done, Meister Wilhelm!" answered Dousa. "Wait here, my young friend, and then go home; I would the time might come again when my salutation would be pleasing to your father. Do you know why it is no longer agreeable to him?"

"No, my lord."

"Then I will tell you. Because he has a liking for Spanish, and I still cling to Dutch."

"We are Hollanders as well as you," answered Nicolas, with cheeks that were beginning to flame.

"Scarcely," returned Dousa quietly, and stroking his lean chin, was about to add a kindlier word to

the harsh one, when the youngster cried impetuously:

"Herr von Nordwyk, you must take back that 'scarcely.'"

Dousa looked in surprise at the lad's fearless face, and his lips began to twitch again. Then he said kindly:

"Herr Nicolas, you please me, and I shall be very glad if you wish to become a true Hollander. Here comes Meister Wilhelm with his cloak. Give me your hand. No, not that one; the other."

Nicolas hesitated. Janus, however, seized the boy's right hand in both of his, bent his tall figure till he was close to the other's ear and said, so softly that the musician could not hear him:

"Before we separate take with you these words from one who means them well. Chains, even golden ones, drag one down, but freedom gives wings. You shine in the glittering splendor, but we strike with our swords at the Spanish fetters, and I glory in our act. Remember these words and, if you care to, repeat them to your father."

Janus Dousa turned his back upon the lad, nodded to the musician and went on his way.

CHAPTER II.

Young Adrian hastened down the Werffsteg, from which his family had taken its name. He took no notice either of the double row of lindens, in whose tops the first green leaves were beginning to peep from the pointed buds, or of the birds that flew hither and thither, twittering and building their nests in the hospitable branches of the noble trees, for his one idea was to reach home as soon as possible.

On the other side of the bridge spanning the Achtergracht he paused irresolutely before a large building.

On the central door hung the knocker, but he did not venture at once to lift it and let it fall upon the glittering plate beneath, for he did not look forward to a pleasant reception from his family.

His doublet had suffered in the struggle with his stronger adversary. The torn ruff had been ejected from its rightful place and was obliged to seek retirement in a pocket, and the new violet stocking on his right leg, unlucky stocking, had been worn through on the pavement, and the gaping rent showed more of Adrian's white knee than was agreeable to him.

The peacock feather in his velvet cap could be easily replaced; but the doublet was not ripped, but torn, and the stocking was almost beyond repair.

The boy was really sorry, for his father had enjoined him to take good care of his clothes, that the pennies might be saved. Money was scarce in this big house which faced the Werffsteg so proudly

with its three doors, as many gables adorned with finely wrought volutes, and six windows in the lower and upper stories.

The burgomastership brought in little and his grandfather's trade of dressing chamois-leather, as well as the business in hides, was on the decline, for his father had other things on his mind—things that not only absorbed all his thoughts, time and strength, but every spare heller as well.

Adrian had nothing pleasant to expect at home —certainly not from his father, and still less from Frau Barbara, his aunt.

But the lad feared the anger of both less than a single glance of displeasure from the eyes of the young woman whom he had called "mother" for scarce twelve months and who was but six years his senior.

She never said an unkind word to him, but his roughness and defiance melted away before her beauty and her quiet and distinguished bearing. Whether he loved her or not, he scarcely knew, but she seemed to him like the good fairy in the fairy tales, and he often thought that she was much too tender and dainty and sweet for her simple, unpretentious surroundings. It made him happy to see her smile, and when she looked sad—and it was not seldom—it made his heart ache. Truly, she could not receive him pleasantly when she saw the torn doublet and the ruff that was hidden in his pocket and the unlucky stockings.

And then!

The bells were ringing again.

The dinner hour was long past and his father waited for no one. Whoever was late had to go hungry unless Aunt Barbara took pity on him in the kitchen.

But what was the use of reflection and hesitation?

Adrian pulled himself together, clinched his teeth, closed his left hand more tightly about the torn ruff in his pocket, and let the knocker fall heavily on the steel plate beneath.

Trautchen, the elderly maid-servant, opened the door, and in the spacious, dimly lighted hall stored with closely packed bales of leather, she noticed nothing of the disorder of his outer man.

He hurried up the stairs.

The dining-room door stood open and—wonder of wonders!—the table was still undisturbed. His father must have remained longer than usual at the Rathhaus.

Adrian bounded up to his little gable-room, dressed himself neatly, and before the master of the house had pronounced the blessing, had joined the family.

The doublet and hose could be confided to Aunt Barbara's or Trautchen's restoring fingers at some opportune time.

Adrian fell valiantly upon the smoking dishes; but he soon began to grow uneasy, for his father did not utter a word and stared before him, as grave and troubled as when distress filled the beleaguered city.

The boy's young stepmother sat opposite her husband and looked often into Peter van der Werff's grave face to catch a kindly glance from him.

Each time that she did so without success, she brushed the fine, golden hair from her forehead, threw back her beautiful head, or bit her lips and gazed silently at her plate.

To Aunt Barbara's questions: "What was done at the council? Have you raised the money for the new bell? Is Jakob van Sloten going to lease you the meadow?" he gave curt, half-evasive answers.

The man who sat so silent and with knitted brows in the midst of his family, and now took a hasty mouthful and now ate nothing at all, did not look like one who abandons himself to idle whims.

All present, even the men and maid-servants, were still doing justice to the viands, when the master of the house rose suddenly, and, pressing his clasped hands to his head, cried with a groan:

"I can stand it no longer. You must say grace, Maria. Janche, go to the Rathhaus and see if no messenger has come."

The man wiped his mouth and obeyed at once. He was a tall, broad-shouldered Friesländer, but he reached only to his master's forehead.

Without speaking to any of his household, Peter van der Werff turned away, opened the door that led to his study, pulled it sharply to as soon as he had crossed the threshold, and advanced to his stout, oaken desk upon which lay high piles of papers and letters, held down by rough, leaden weights, and began to turn over the newly arrived documents. For quarter of an hour he strove in vain to fix upon them the attention they required. Then he grasped his study-chair and supported his folded arms on its high carved back. He stared meditatively at the wooden wainscoting of the ceiling. In a few moments he pushed the chair aside with his foot, raised his hand to his mouth, divided his mustache from his thick brown beard, and stepped to the window. The small, round, leaden-framed panes, however brightly they were polished, permitted only a small portion of the street to be seen, but the burgomaster had evidently found what he sought, for he hastily flung up the window and shouted to the serving man who was coming rapidly toward the house:

"Here, Janche; has he come?"

The Frieslander shook his head; the window banged to, and a few moments later the burgomaster seized his hat, which, together with a number of horse pistols and a plain, substantial sword, hung under the picture of a young woman on the only wall of the room that was not wholly bare.

He could no longer endure in the house the cruel unrest that possessed him.

He would order his horse and ride out to meet the expected messenger.

Before leaving the room he paused thoughtfully, then returned once more to his desk to sign some papers destined for the Rathhaus, as it might be night before he returned.

Still standing, he glanced over two sheets he had spread out before him and reached for the pen. Just then the door opened softly and the fresh sand strewn over the white boards grated under a light foot. He heard it, but paid no heed.

His wife stood close behind him. Twenty-four years younger than he, she seemed like a timid girl as she raised her arm and yet did not venture to distract her husband's attention from his work.

She waited quietly until he had signed the first document, then she sank her pretty head, and blushing slightly, said with downcast eyes:

"It is I, Peter."

"Very well, my child," he answered briefly, and raised the second paper nearer to his eyes.

"Peter!" she exclaimed more urgently than before, but still timidly, "I have something to say to you."

Van der Werff turned his head toward her and gave her a quick, affectionate glance.

"Now, child? You see I have work to do and there lies my hat."

"But Peter!" she answered, and something like displeasure shone in her eyes as she went on in a slightly aggrieved tone: "We haven't had a word together to-day. My heart is so full and what I would like to say to you is—must——"

"When I return, Maria, not now," he answered, interrupting her, and his deep voice sounded half impatient, half pleading: "First the town and the state—then love."

Maria drew up her head proudly at these words and said with trembling lips:

"That is what you have said ever since the first day of our marriage."

"And unhappily—unhappily—I must continue to say it, until we have reached the goal," he said firmly.

The blood rose to her delicate cheeks and, breathing more rapidly, she cried in a quick, determined tone:

"Yes, I have heard those words ever since your wooing, and I am my father's daughter and have never opposed them, but it no longer applies to us two; it ought to be: 'All for the country and nothing for the wife.'"

Van der Werff laid down his pen and turned full toward his young wife.

Her slight figure seemed to have grown taller, and the blue eyes swimming in tears had a proud light in them. God seemed to have created this woman for him and him alone. His heart went out to her. He frankly stretched out both hands to her and said fervently:

"You know how matters stand! My heart does not change, and better times are coming."

"When will they come?" asked Maria gloomily, as though she did not believe in a brighter future.

"Soon," answered her husband steadfastly.

"Soon, if only each will give willingly what the fatherland demands."

As he spoke the young wife freed her hands from her husband's; the door had opened and Frau Barbara called from the threshold to her brother:

"Herr Matenesse van Wibisma, the Glipper, is in the hall and wishes to speak with you."

"Show him up," said the burgomaster reluctantly.

When he was alone with his wife again he asked hurriedly:

"Will you be indulgent with me, and will you help me?"

She nodded assent and tried to smile.

He saw that she was not happy and it grieved him. He stretched out his hand to her again and said:

"Better days are coming when I can be more to you than I am now. What was it you wanted to say to me?"

"Whether I tell you or not will make little difference to the state."

"But it will to you. So lift your head again and look at me. Be quick, sweet, for they are already on the stairs."

"It isn't worth speaking of—a year ago to-day—we might have celebrated our wedding-day to-day."

"Our wedding-day!" he cried, striking his hands together. "You are right, it is the seventeenth of April and I—I had forgotten it!"

He drew her lovingly to him, the door opened and Adrian conducted the baron into the room.

Van der Werff bowed courteously to his unwonted guest, then he called affectionately after his wife, who was retreating, blushing:

"My congratulations! I will join you shortly.

Adrian, we celebrate a great anniversary to day—our wedding-day."

The lad slipped quickly out of the door, near which he had been standing, for he suspected that the distinguished guest's visit boded him no good.

He paused in the hall, thinking. Then he sped up the staircase, got his featherless cap, and hurried outside the city gates.

There he saw his comrades, who with sticks and stones were placing themselves in battle array.

He would have liked to join them and for that reason he did not wish to hear the shouts of the combatants, and ran toward the Zylhof until he was out of reach of their voices.

Then he slackened his pace, and, with bended back and sometimes on his knees, he followed along a little canal that emptied into the Rhine.

As soon as his cap was filled with the white, blue and yellow spring flowers he had been gathering he seated himself on a boundary stone, and, after arranging them into a brilliant nosegay, he started with it for home.

On a bench near the gate sat the elderly maid-servant with his little six-year old sister. To the latter he handed the flowers, which he had hitherto kept hidden behind his back.

"Take these, Elizabethchen," he said, "and carry them to mamma; to-day is the anniversay of her wedding-day. I know it is. And carry her a pretty message from us both."

The little one started up, and the old woman said:

"You are a good lad, Adrianchen."

"Do you think so?" he asked, as all the sins of the morning rose before his mind.

But unfortunately they caused him no remorse; and his lips twitched and a roguish light came into

his eyes as he patted the old woman's shoulder and whispered softly in her ear:

"Hair has been flying to-day, Trautchen. Up in my room, under the bed, you will find my doublet and my new hose. No one can mend as well as you."

The old serving woman shook her finger at him, but he turned swiftly and ran to the Zylthor,* this time to lead the Spaniards against the Netherlanders.

* Zyl-gate.

CHAPTER III.

The burgomaster had bidden the nobleman to seat himself in his study-chair, but he himself remained half leaning, half sitting on the desk, and listened to his distinguished guest, not without impatience.

"Before we speak of more important matters," began Herr Matenesse van Wibisma, "I wish to appeal to you, as a just man, for punishment for the insult offered to my race in this city."

"Speak on," said the burgomaster, and the nobleman recounted briefly and with unconcealed indignation the story of the attack made upon his son near St. Peter's.

"I shall inform the rector of this unfortunate affair," answered Van der Werff, "and the culprits will get their just deserts; but, forgive me, noble sir, if I ask: Have you inquired as to who began the quarrel?"

Herr Matenesse van Wibisma looked at the burgomaster in surprise and answered haughtily:

"You have heard my son's statement."

"Both sides must be given a fair hearing," Van der Werff answered quietly. "It is the ancient custom of the Netherlands."

"My son bears my name and speaks the truth."

"Our lads are named plain Leendert or Adrian or Gerrit, but they do the same, and so I must ask you to send the young gentleman to the hearing at the school."

"By no means," answered the the nobleman. "If I had thought the matter belonged to the rector's province I should have gone to him and not to you, Herr Peter. My son has his own instructor and he was not attacked in your school, which he has outgrown, moreover, for he is already seventeen, but in the public streets over whose safety it is your duty as burgomaster to watch."

"Very well, then, make your complaint, bring the young man before the judges, procure witnesses, and let the law take its course. But, my lord," continued Van der Werff, checking the impatience in his voice, "were you yourself never young? Have you completely forgotten the brawls under the citadel? What pleasure can it afford you if we shut up a few thoughtless wights for a few days this sunny weather? The rascals will find some way of amusing themselves, shut up or not, and the parents alone will suffer." The last words were spoken in a tone of such friendly good nature that they did not fail in their effect upon the baron. He was a handsome man whose pleasant, well-molded features of true Netherland type betrayed anything but hardness.

"If you speak to me in this tone," he answered smiling, "we are much more likely to come to an agreement. I will say only this: if the brawl had originated in play or in a boyish quarrel, I would not say a word—but when even children take it upon themselves to attack with insult and violence those whose opinions differ from their own, it ought not to be allowed to pass without punishment. The boys shouted that foolish name after my son——"

"It is indeed an insult," interrupted Van der Werff; "a very ugly name it is, with which our people designate the enemies of their freedom."

The baron rose and angrily confronted the other.

"Who says," he cried, striking his broad padded breast, "who says that we grudge Holland her liberty? We are as eager as you to win it back for the States, but in other and straighter ways than Orange."

"Whether your way is crooked or straight, my lord," retorted Van der Werff, "is not for me to prove here; but one thing I know: it is the wrong way."

"It will lead to the heart of Philip, your king and mine."

"Yes, if he had what we in Holland call a heart," answered the other with a bitter smile. Wibisma, however, angrily flung back his head and answered reprovingly:

"Herr Bürgemeister, you speak of the anointed king to whom I have sworn allegiance."

"Freiherr Matenesse," answered Van der Werff, drawing himself up to his full height, folding his arms, and looking the nobleman sharply in the face, "I speak rather of the despot whose Council of Blood pronounced all bearing the name of a Netherlander, and you with the rest, criminals deserving of death; who through his Alva, his murderous devil, has burned, beheaded, and hanged ten thousand honest burghers and has robbed of their lands and driven from the country ten thousand more; I speak of the infamous tyrant——"

"Enough!" cried the nobleman, grasping the hilt of his sword. "Who gives you the right——"

"Who gives me the right to speak such bitter words, you were going to say?" interrupted Herr Peter, with a somber glance into the other's eyes. "Who gives me the right? There is no need for me to conceal it. This right is given me by the silent lips of my gallant father who was beheaded on account of his belief; this right is given me by the

despotic decree that, without form of law, exiled me and my brothers from the land; this right is given me by the Spaniard's broken faith, the torn charters of this land, the distress of the poor, brave, ill-used people who will go to destruction unless we save them."

"You will not save them," answered Wibisma, in a calmer tone. "You will push into the abyss the people already tottering on the brink, and you, too, will perish with them."

"We are the pilots. Perhaps we shall rescue them; perhaps we shall go down with those for whom we are ready to die."

"You say this, and yet you bind to yours the destiny of a beautiful young woman."

"Herr Baron, you crossed this threshold as complainant to the burgomaster, and not as friend or guest."

"Quite true, but I came with good intentions; to warn the leader and chief magistrate of this beautifull and unhappy city. You have escaped the tempest once, but another and far more terrible one is gathering over your heads."

"We do not fear it."

"Not even now?"

"Less now, and with good reason, than ever before."

"Then you do not know that the prince's brother——"

"On the fourteenth Louis of Nassau met the Spaniards, and our cause looks well."

"It is true that at first it did look well."

"The messenger who came last night——"

"Ours came this morning."

"This morning, you say? What then?"

"The prince's army was defeated on the Mooker Haide and completely destroyed. Louis of Nassau himself perished."

Van der Werff pressed his fingers hard against the wood of the writing-desk. The fresh color in his cheeks and lips had given place to an ashen pallor, and as he asked in a low, dull voice: "Louis dead, really dead?" his lips were drawn with pain.

"Dead," answered the baron positively, though sadly. "We were opponents, but Louis was a noble youth. I mourn him with you."

"Dead, William's favorite dead!" murmured the burgomaster to himself as in a dream. Then with an effort he controlled himself, and said steadily:

"Your pardon, noble sir. The hours fly; I must hasten to the Rathhaus."

"And in spite of the news I bring, you will continue to speak in favor of revolt?"

"Yes, my lord, as surely as I am a Hollander."

"Remember the fate of Haarlem."

"I think of the resistance of its burghers and of rescued Alkamar."

"Man, man!" cried the baron. "By all that is sacred, I implore you, let yourself be advised."

"Enough, Herr Baron, I must go to the Rathhaus."

"No, this one word more, this one word. I know that you call us 'Glippers,' deserters, and not that alone, but as truly as I hope for God's mercy, you judge us falsely. No, Herr Peter, no, I am no traitor! I love this country and this brave, industrious people with as much fervor as you, for their blood flows in my veins likewise. I too, signed the Compromise. Here I stand. Look at me. Do I look like a Judas? Do I look like a Spaniard? Can you blame me for remaining true to the oath that I made to the king? Since when have Netherlanders trifled with their oaths? You, the friend of Orange, have just declared that you grudge no man the faith to which he clings, and I do not doubt it.

Well, I hold fast to the old Church; I am a Catholic and shall remain one. But at this hour I admit frankly that I abhor, as you do, the Inquisition and the bloody deeds of Alva. They belong as little to our faith as iconoclasm does to yours. I love as you do the liberties of our land. To win them back is my purpose as well as yours. But how can we, little band that we are ever succeed in resisting for any length of time the strongest power in the world? Should we win, once, twice, thrice, for every defeated army two new and stronger ones would follow. We can accomplish nothing by force—but much by wise submission and prudent conduct. Philip's coffers are empty; he has need of his armies in other lands. Well, then, let us take advantage of his necessities and compel him to ratify again some lost privilege for every rebel town that returns to him. Let us buy from him, with what is left us of the old wealth, the rights that he seized in battle against the insurgents. You will find me and those who think with me waiting with open hands. Your voice has great weight in the Council of this city. You are a friend of Orange, and if you could persuade him——"

"To what my, lord?"

"To join us. We know that in Madrid his power is appreciated and feared. We will stipulate as a first condition, full forgiveness for him and his followers. King Philip, I know, will restore him to favor again——"

"To murder him," answered the burgomaster decidedly. "Have you forgotten those other false promises of pardons—have you forgotten the fate of Egmont and Horn, of the noble Montigny and the other seigneurs? They took the risk and went into the tiger's den. What we bought to-day would surely be taken from us to-morrow, for what oath

would be sacred to Philip? I am no statesman, but this I know—were he to restore to us all our liberties, the one without which life is worthless he would never grant us."

"Which, Herr Peter?"

"The right to believe as our hearts dictate. You mean well, in your way, my lord; but you trust the Spaniard, we do not; and were we to, we should be deluded children. You have nothing to fear for your faith, but we, everything; you think that numbers and the power of money will decide the issue in this struggle, we rely on the hope that God will help to victory the good cause of a courageous people who are ready to die a thousand deaths for their freedom's sake. This is my belief and I shall defend it in the Rathhaus."

"No, Meister Peter, no! You cannot, ought not."

"What I can do is little, what I ought to do stands written here, and I shall act accordingly."

"And thus you will be following your grieving heart and not your prudent head, and you will be unable to give others any but bad advice. Remember, man, on Mooker Heide Orange's last army has been utterly destroyed."

"True, my lord, and therefore we must use this moment for deeds and not words."

"I can say the same thing myself, Herr Bürgemeister, for there are many friends of the king in Leyden who must be warned against blindly following you to the shambles."

At these words Van der Werff stepped back from the nobleman, and raising his deep voice, said coldly and authoritatively:

"Then, as guardian of the safety of this city, I command you to leave Leyden at once. If you are still within these walls after noon to-morrow, I will have the guard conduct you outside the city limits."

The baron departed without a word of farewell. As soon as the door had closed behind him Van der Werff flung himself into an armchair and buried his face in his hands.

When he raised his head again two big tears glistened on the paper upon which his hands had rested. With a bitter smile he brushed them away with the back of his hand.

"Dead, dead!" he murmured, and the figure of the brave young hero, the skillful mediator, the favorite of William of Orange, rose before him: he asked himself how this fresh blow would affect the prince whom he revered as the country's savior, and admired and loved as the wisest and most unselfish of men. William's sorrow affected him as though it were his own, and the blow that the cause of liberty had suffered was severe and perhaps never to be repaired.

But it was only for a short time that he allowed himself to indulge his sorrow, for now was the time to summon all his strength, to retrieve what had been lost, to avert by fresh deeds the grave consequences of Louis' defeat and to think of new means for carrying on the struggle.

With heavily knitted brows he paced the room, thinking over plans, devising ways and means.

His wife had opened the door and had remained standing on the threshold; he did not notice her, however, until she spoke his name and came toward him.

She held in her hand a portion of the flowers the lad had brought her, the rest were gayly adorning her bosom.

"Take them," she said, holding out the little nosegay. "Adrian picked them, the dear boy, and you know now what they mean."

He willingly took the messengers of spring, raised

them to his face, drew Maria to his breast, pressed a long kiss upon her forehead, and then said gloomily :

"So this is how we celebrate the first anniversary of our wedding-day! Poor child! The Glipper was not so far wrong; perhaps it had been better and wiser in me had I not bound your fate to mine."

"Peter!" she cried reproachfully, "how can such thoughts have come to you?"

"Louis of Nassau is dead," he murmured heavily; "his army is destroyed."

"Oh! oh!" she cried, clasping her hands together in dismay; but he continued :

"It was the last of our forces. The coffers are empty, and where are we to get fresh means? and what is to happen now? I beg of you, Maria, leave me to myself; if we do not make use of these hours, if we do not find the right way now, things will fare ill; they must fare ill."

So saying, he flung the nosegay upon the table, and hastily taking up a paper, began to scan its contents, and without looking at her, motioned her aside.

The young wife's heart had been full when she entered the room. She had expected so much from this hour, and now she was standing alone in the room, though he shared it with her. Her arms had fallen at her side; she gazed at him, hurt, humiliated, and bewildered.

Maria had grown up in the midst of the struggle for freedom, and knew how to appreciate the gravity of the news he had received. In his wooing he had told her that a life full of danger and unrest awaited her at his side, and yet she had gladly followed to the altar the gallant fighter in the good cause, which had also been her father's, for she had hoped to be the sharer of his cares and struggles. And now—what was she allowed to be to him? What

did he accept from her? She was not a weak woman, but what had he been disposed to share with her, on this, the anniversary of their wedding day?

There she stood, and the heart that had been open to him closed, and kept her from calling out to him and saying that she was as glad to share trouble and misfortune with him as honor and success.

He had found what he sought, and was reaching for his hat, when he caught sight of her.

How pale and disappointed she looked as she stood there!

His heart smote him; he would so gladly have expressed in words the great love he felt for her; but in this hour, with such cares in his breast, he could not do it; and so he only held out both hands to her and said affectionately:

"You know what you are to me, Maria, and if you do not know, I will tell you this evening. I must hasten to the Council now or else a whole day will be lost, and at such times every second is of importance. Well, Maria?"

The young wife looked down. She would gladly have run to his arms, but her injured pride would not let her, and a secret power held her hands and kept her from placing them in his.

"Good-by," she said dully.

"Maria, truly the time is ill-chosen for pouting," he cried reproachfully. "Come and be my sensible wife."

But she did not come at once; he heard the bells ringing for four o'clock, which marked the close of the meeting of the Council, and he left the room without looking at her.

On the desk still lay the nosegay; she did not fail to notice it and it was with difficulty that she kept back the tears.

CHAPTER IV.

A CROWD of burghers had assembled before the imposing Rathhaus. The news of the defeat of Louis of Nassau had soon spread through all eighteen quarters of the city, and every one wished to learn something more definite, and to express to his friends his grief and apprehension, and to hear what measures the council meant to take for the immediate future.

Two messengers had confirmed only too well the report of Herr Matenesse van Wibisma. Louis was dead, his brother Henry was missing, and his army was completely annihilated.

The clerk of the Council, Jan van Hout, who had been teaching the boys that morning, now stepped to a window, and, after informing the burghers of the serious blow that the freedom of the country had sustained, called upon them with burning words to devote themselves body and soul to the good cause.

Loud cheers followed this speech. Colored caps and feathered hats were tossed into the air, sticks and swords were brandished, and the women and children who had pushed in among the men waved their handkerchiefs and drowned the burghers' voices with their shriller tones.

The members of the doughty militia came together to commission their captain to give the assembled council the assurance that the "Schutterig" were resolved to stand by William of Orange with their

last penny and their last drop of blood, and that they would rather die in Holland's cause than live under Spanish tyranny. In their midst were many grave and deeply troubled faces, for these men, who filled the ranks of their own free will, were all devoted to Orange; his sorrow saddened them—and their country's peril grieved them to the heart. As soon as the four burgomasters, the eight aldermen, and the members of the common Council who were present showed themselves at the windows, hundreds took up the Geusenlied *, which had already been started by a few, and when at sunset the volatile folk dispersed and, still singing, made their way singly or in groups toward the taverns to strengthen by a refreshing drink their confidence in happier days and to dispel many well-founded fears, the market place of Leyden looked as though the news of some great victory had just been read from the Rathhaus.

The cheers and the Geusenlied had indeed sounded most impressive—but so many hundreds of Dutch throats were capable of shaking the air with mightier shouts.

This very observation had been made by three well-dressed burghers who were walking along the broad street, and the eldest of them said to his companions:

"They are boasting and shouting now and think themselves very big, but we shall see that things will soon be very different."

"May God avert the worst!" answered one of his companions, "but the Spaniards are sure to return now, and in my quarter I know many who will not vote for resistance this time."

"They are right, a thousand times right. Reque-

* The song of the "Beggars."

sens is no Alva, and if we were voluntarily to commend ourselves to the king's mercy——"

"There would be no shedding of blood and all would be well."

"I would rather be Dutch than Spanish," said the third, "but with Mooker Heide, all resistance is at an end. Orange may be a gallant gentleman, but—near is my shirt but nearer is my skin."

"And after all, it is only for him that we are placing life and property at stake."

"Exactly what my wife said yesterday."

"He isn't going to advance trade; he least of all. Believe me, many think as we do, or the Geusenlied would have sounded louder."

"There are always five fools to three wise men," said the elder burgher. "I took good care not to open my mouth."

"And what is there so very wonderful behind this cry for liberty? Alva burned the Bible readers and De la Marc hangs the priests. My wife is fond of going to mass, but when she goes she does it in secret, as though she were committing a crime."

"We also cling to the old faith."

"It isn't a question of belief," said the third. "We are Calvinists, but I am no longer of a mind to fling my pennies into Orange's maw, nor do I care to tear down again the frames outside the Kuhthor,* where my stuffs are hanging before the wind has fully dried the yarn."

"Let us only stand together," counseled the eldest. "The people dare not speak their minds as yet, and every ragged beggar may play the hero. But I tell you, there are sensible men enough in every quarter and every guild, and even in the Council and among the burgomasters."

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* Cow-gate.

"Hush!" whispered the second burgher, "here comes Van der Werff with the clerk of the Council and young Herr van der Does; they are the worst of them all."

The three men named came down the broad street, talking in eager but low tones.

"My uncle was right, Meister Peter," said Jan van der Does, the same tall gentleman who had that morning sent Nicolas van Wibisma home with a piece of good advice. "There is no help for it, you must go to the prince and take counsel with him."

"I must indeed," answered the burgomaster. "I will start to-morrow."

"Not to-morrow," Van Hout broke in. "The prince rides fast and if you do not find him in Delft——"

"You go before me," begged Van der Werff, "you have the record of our sitting."

"I cannot; but you, the prince's friend, are lacking in readiness to-day for the first time."

"You are right, Jan," cried the burgomaster, "and you shall know what detains me."

"If they are things of which a friend can relieve you, here he stands," said Herr von Nordwyk.

Van der Werff grasped the hand that the young noble offered him and answered with a smile: "No, my lord, no. You know my young wife. To-day we ought to have celebrated the first anniversary of our wedding, and I, what with all these troubles, shamelessly forgot it."

"Hard, hard," said Van Hout softly. Then he drew himself erect and added firmly: "And yet! if I were you, I would go in spite of Frau Maria."

"You would go to-day?"

"To-day, for to-morrow it may be too late. Who knows how soon egress may be debarred us, and

before we again dare the worst, we must know the prince's opinion. He is the head, we are the hands. You, sir, stand closer to him than either of us."

"And God knows how willingly I would carry him a word of cheer in these sad hours, but it cannot be to-day. The messenger has taken my bay."

"Then take my chestnut; he is faster than yours besides," said Janus Dousa, and Van der Werff answered quickly:

"Thank you. To-morrow, early, I will send for him."

The blood rushed to Van Hout's head. He thrust his hand impatiently between girdle and doublet and cried: "Send the chestnut to me, my lord, if the Herr Bürgemeister will give me leave of absence."

"No, send him to me," broke in Peter calmly. "What must be, must be; I will ride to-night."

Van Hout's manly features cleared at once, and seizing the burgomaster's hand in both of his, he said joyfully:

"You have my thanks, Herr Peter. And do not take offense; you know my hot head. Send your young wife to mine if the time seems long to her."

"And to mine," added Dousa. "It is a curious thing about the two little words 'wish' and 'ought.' The freer and better a man is the more he finds that the first is slave to the second."

"And yet I would wager, Herr Peter, that your wife will confound the two words and will believe that you have taken a wrong view of the 'ought.' These are bad times for 'wish.'"

Van der Werff nodded assent and briefly laid before his friends what he proposed to make known to the prince.

The three men separated in front of his house.

"Tell the prince," said Van Hout in parting,

"that we are prepared for the worst; we are ready to suffer and to dare all."

At these words Janus Dousa measured his two colleagues with a glance, his lips quivered as they always did when he was strongly moved, and his keen face shone with joy and confidence as he cried: "We three will endure, we three will stand firm; the tyrant can break our necks, but he shall not bend them. Our bodies and our lives, all that we possess, all that man holds dear and worth the having, we will give for the greatest of all possessions.

"Yes," said Van der Werff in a loud and earnest tone, and Van Hout repeated passionately: "Yes, yes, and once more, yes."

For an instant the hands of the three friends clasped each other in a firm grasp. A silent vow united them at this hour, and as Herr von Nordwyk turned one way and Van Hout another, it seemed to the burghers who met them that their tall figures had grown taller during the past hours.

The burgomaster went at once to his wife's room, but she was not there.

She had gone for a walk with his sister outside the city gates.

The maid carried a light to his room; he followed her, examined the locks of his pistols, buckled on his sword, placed what he needed in his saddle-bags, and then, drawn to his full height, his mind completely filled with his purpose, he paced the room, lost in meditation.

Herr von Nordwyk's chestnut was standing on the pavement below, and above the roofs rose the evening star.

The house door opened.

He stepped into the hall, but he found there not his wife but only Adrian, who had just come home.

He commissioned the boy to give a loving message

to his mother and to tell her that important matters summoned him to the prince.

The old serving woman had already undressed and washed the little Elizabeth. She brought him the child wrapped in a coverlet.

He kissed the sweet little face, which smiled at him from the queer mufflings, pressed his lips to Adrian's forehead, enjoined upon him once more to give the message to his mother, and then rode off down the Marendorpstrasse.

As he reached St. Stephen's cloister two women came toward him from the direction of the Rheinsburgerthor.* He did not notice them, but the younger of them pushed back her hood and gazed after him, and her fingers closed sharply on her companion's wrist as she exclaimed in a low voice:

"That was Peter!"

Frau Barbara raised her head.

"It is well that I am not easily frightened," she answered. "Only let go my arm! Do you mean the horseman who is jogging past the lane of St. Ursula?"

"Yes, it is Peter."

"Nonsense, child! His bay has shorter legs than that camel there; and Peter never rides out at this hour."

"But it was he."

"Nothing of the sort! At night lindens look like beeches. It would be a fine thing indeed, if he should not come home to-day."

These last words had involuntarily escaped Frau Barbara's lips; for until then she had wisely appeared to be unconscious that between Maria and her husband all was not as it should be; she was, nevertheless, fully aware of what was passing in her sister-in-law's mind.

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* Rheinsburger-gate.

She was a clever and worldly-wise woman, she by no means underestimated her brother and his importance to the cause of the fatherland; indeed she went so far as to believe that, aside from the Prince of Orange, no man on earth was more capable than Peter of conducting the cause of freedom to a successful issue; but she felt that her brother was not acting as he should toward Maria, and as Barbara was a just woman, she sided silently against the man who was neglecting his wife.

They walked on in silence for a space.

At last the widow paused and said:

"Perhaps the prince has sent for Peter. At such a time, after such a blow, all things are possible. It may be that you saw truly."

"It was undoubtedly he," answered Maria positively.

"Poor man!" said the other. "It will be a bitter journey for him! Many honors bring many cares. There is no reason for you to hang your head. Your husband will be back to-morrow or next day; but I—look at me, Maria, I go conscientiously through life, doing my duty cheerfully; my cheeks are red and my appetite is good, and yet I have had to give up what was dearest to me. I have borne my widowhood for ten years; my Gretchen has married and left me, and Cornelius I sent myself to join the Beggars of the Sea. Any hour may rob me of him, for his life is one of constant danger. What has a widow beside her only son? And I gave him up for the country's cause! It is a harder thing than to see one's husband ride away for a few hours on the anniversary of one's wedding-day. He certainly does not do it for his own pleasure!"

"We have reached home," said Maria, and lifted the knocker.

Trautchen opened the door, and, before she crossed the threshold, Barbara asked:

"Is the master at home?"

The answer was in the negative, as she herself had come to expect.

Adrian delivered his message; Trautchen brought in supper, but the conversation was restricted to "yes" and "no."

When Maria had hurriedly murmured the blessing, she rose, and turning to Barbara said:

"My head is aching; I think I shall go to bed."

"Yes, try to get some rest," replied the widow. "I will sleep in the next room and will leave the door open. With darkness and quiet come melancholy thoughts."

Maria kissed her sister-in-law with unaffected warmth and went to her room; but she could not sleep and tossed about uneasily on her bed till midnight.

She heard Barbara cough in the next room, she sat up and asked:

"Are you asleep?"

"No, child. Do you feel ill?"

"No, but I am so uneasy—I am tormented by horrible thoughts."

Barbara lighted a taper, and carrying it into the sleeping-room, seated herself on the edge of the bed.

It went to her heart to see the sweet, young creature lying there alone and troubled, unable to sleep for bitter heartache.

She had never seen Maria look so beautiful. Like a sorrowing angel, she lay in her white night-robe on the snowy pillows.

Barbara could not refrain from stroking the hair from the low forehead and kissing the flushed cheek.

Maria looked gratefully into her small light-blue eyes and said pleadingly:

"I would like to ask you something."

"Well?"

"But you will tell me the truth?"

"You ask too much."

"I know that you are frank, but——"

"Come, out with it!"

"Was Peter happy with his first wife?"

"Yes; child, yes."

"And you knew it not from him alone, but from Eva herself?"

"Yes, dear, yes."

"And you cannot be mistaken?"

"No; in this case, certainly not. But what puts such thoughts into your head? 'Let the dead bury the dead,' the Scriptures say. Now turn over and try to sleep."

Barbara returned to her room, but hours passed before Maria found the sleep she sought.

CHAPTER V.

The following morning, two mounted retainers in neat liveries drew rein in the Nobelstrasse before a fine house not far from the market place. A third led up and down two piebald horses of powerful build, and a stable-boy held by the bridle a gayly caparisoned pony. This last was to carry the young negro who was standing in the doorway, keeping off the street arabs who ventured to approach him, by rolling his eyes and gnashing his white teeth at them.

"What can be keeping them?" asked one of the two horsemen. "The rain won't be long in coming to-day."

"It will not, truly," answered the other. "The sky is as gray as my old felt hat, and by the time we reach the wood the storm will be upon us."

"There's a thick mist already."

"I dislike such raw weather above all things."

"It was finer yesterday."

"Buckle the flaps of the holsters tighter. The wallet behind the young lord's saddle is not quite straight. That's right. Did the cook fill your flask for you?"

"With brown Spanish wine. There it is."

"Then let the rain come if it will. When a man is wet within he can stand a deal of damp without."

"Bring up the horses to the door; I hear the masters."

The horseman was not mistaken; for before his comrade had succeeded in bringing the taller of the animals to a standstill, there came from the wide hall the voices of his master, Herr Matenesse van Wibisma and of the young lord, Nicolas.

Both were exchanging friendly words of farewell with a young girl, whose voice sounded deeper than that of the half-grown lad.

The elder noble had begun to twist his hand in the piebald's mane, and had already raised his foot to place it in the stirrup, when the young girl, who had remained behind in the hall, stepped out into the street, and laying her hand on Wibisma's arm, said:

"One word more, uncle; but with you alone."

The baron still retained his hold of the horse's mane, but responded with a courteous smile:

"I only trust that it will not be too heavy for my steed; such a secret from a pretty mouth has its weight."

With that he bent his head toward his niece; she, however, seemed to have no thought of whispering, for she came no nearer to him, and said in an undertone only, though in Italian:

"Tell my father, please, that I shall not stay here."

"But, Henrika!"

"Tell him I will not remain under any circumstances."

"Your aunt will not let you go."

"Once for all, I will not remain."

"I will deliver your message, but in a somewhat milder form, if you will allow me."

"As you choose. Only tell him that I beg him to send for me. If he does not care himself to enter this nest of heretics, for which I do not blame him in the least, let him send me horses or the carriage."

"And your reasons?"

"I will not make your burden heavier. Now go, or your saddle will be wet before you start."

"Then I am to comfort Hoogstraten with the prospect of a letter?"

"No, such things can't be written. Tell my father that I will not stay with my aunt, and wish to go home. Good-by, Nico! The riding boots and doublet of green cloth are more becoming to you than silken finery."

The girl kissed her hand to the young noble who had already swung himself into the saddle, and ran back into the house. Her uncle shrugged his shoulders, mounted his horse, wrapped himself more closely in his dark cloak, beckoned Nicolas to his side, and rode on with him in advance of the servants.

As long as their way led through the town no word was exchanged between them; once outside the gate, however, Wibisma said:

"Henrika finds the time hang heavy in Leyden; she wishes to return to her father."

"It cannot be very easy to live with our cousin," answered the lad.

"She is old and sick, and her life has been a joyless one."

"But she was beautiful once. One cannot see many traces of it now, but her eyes are still as they are in her portrait, and besides, she is so rich."

"That does not bring happiness."

"But why did she remain single?"

The baron shrugged his shoulders and replied:

"It was no fault of the men."

"Then why didn't she go into a convent?"

"Who can tell? Women's hearts are harder to understand than your Greek books. You will find this out later. What were you saying to your cousin as I came up?"

"Look," answered the boy, taking the reins in his teeth and pulling off the glove from his left hand; "she placed this ring on my finger."

"A superb emerald! She is usually reluctant to part with such things."

"She offered me another at first and said that she gave it to me to console me for the blows I received yesterday as a true adherent of the king. Wasn't that strange?"

"More than that, I should say."

"It went against the grain for me to take a reward for my black and blue spots, so I drew my hand quickly away and said that the burgher lads had carried home some of my giving and that as a reward for *that*, I would take the circlet."

"Right, Nico, right."

"So she said too; she laid the little ring in the casket again and selected this one, and here it is."

"A rare gem!" murmured the baron, and then to himself: "This gift is likewise a good omen. He and the Hoogstratens are her nearest heirs, and if the silly girl will not remain with her——"

But he had no time to carry these reflections to a conclusion, for his son broke in upon them, saying:

"The rain is already beginning! Don't the mists over there on the meadows look like clouds fallen from the sky? How cold I am!"

"Draw your cloak closer about you."

"How it rains and hails! One would think that winter had come again. The water in the canals looks black, and there—look—what is that?"

By the roadside stood a tavern, and before it rose a solitary and lofty elm, the trunk of which, straight and bare as a mast, did not separate into branches until it attained the height of a house. Spring had not yet brought any leaves to its boughs, but in the tree's bare top there were many things to be seen.

To one branch was fastened a pennon with the colors of the House of Orange, to another hung a huge doll, which from a distance looked like a man clad in black, from a third swung an old hat, and to a fourth was affixed a piece of white parchment on which was written in large black letters already blurred by the rain :

> " Hail to Orange, to the Spaniard death,
> Thus Peter Quatgelat welcomes his guests."

This gayly decorated tree presented a by no means attractive appearance in the cold, gray, misty air of that rainy April morning.

Beside the puppet swayed to and fro by the wind had alighted a number of crows that had mistaken it for an actual body. They must have been birds of small intelligence, for since the Spaniards had ruled in Holland the scaffolds had not been empty for many a year. The crows were cawing as though with disappointment, but they nevertheless remained sitting on the tree which they doubtless took for a scaffold. The other absurd decorations and the thought of the nimble dare-devil who must have climbed up there to put them in their place were in harsh and unpleasant contrast to this caricature of the gallows.

Nicolas, however, laughed loudly when he caught sight of the curious objects in the top of the elm, and pointing upward, cried :

" What strange fruits are hanging there !"

But the next instant a shudder passed over him, for a crow had fastened upon the black doll and pecked so hard at it with its beak that both it and the bird swayed to and fro like a pendulum.

"What does this nonsense mean ?" asked the baron, turning to the man who rode behind him.

"It's a sort of tavern-sign," answered the latter. "It looked gay enough yesterday when the sun shone upon it, but to-day—b-r-r-r—it makes one creep."

The nobleman's eyes were not sharp enough to distinguish the inscription on the parchment. When Nicolas had read it to him he muttered an oath, then turned to the man again, and asked:

"And does this nonsense bring guests to the rascally landlord?"

"Yes, my lord; and, by my soul, it looked comical enough yesterday when the crows up there were lacking; you couldn't look at it without laughing. Half Leyden was out here and we let ourselves be drawn out with the crowd. Such goings on on the grass plot there. Doodle-dum—hübütt—hübütt—doodle-dum—the squeaking of fiddles and the squealing of bagpipes never stopped. And the shouts of the wild mob added to the din; the noise still rings in my ears. There was no end to the music and dancing. The men flung their brown and red and blue-stockinged legs into the air at the bidding of the fiddles, and with a girl on one arm and a beer mug held high over their heads, round and round they went with flying coat tails. There was as much shouting and rejoicing as though every buttercup in the grass had turned into a gold gulden. But to-day, holy Florian, what a rain it is!"

"Just what the things up there need," cried the baron. "The tinder will be wet in such a downpour, or I would get out the pistols and shoot the shabby liberty hat and the tawdry rags from the tree."

"The dancing ground was there," observed the man, and pointed to the trampled grass.

"The people are possessed, wholly possessed," cried the baron. "Dancing and shouting to-day, and

to-morrow the wind will blow the hat and the pennon from the tree, and instead of the black puppet, they themselves will be hanging from the gallows. Steady, steady! The hailstones frighten the horses. Unbuckle the wallet, Gerritt, and give your young master his mantle."

"At once, my lord! But would it not be better to enter here until the shower passes? Holy Florian! Look at the hailstone in your horse's mane! It's as large as a pigeon's egg. There are already two horses standing under the shed and Quatgelat's beer is not bad."

The nobleman looked questioningly at his son.

"Let us go in," said the latter; "we shall get to the Hague early enough. Look how poor Balthasar is shivering! Henrika says that he is a white painted black, but if she could see how well the color holds in this downpour she would take it back."

Herr van Wibisma turned his dripping and smoking horse toward the house, and in a few moments he and his son crossed the threshold of the tavern.

CHAPTER VI.

As they entered the large, low room, the travelers were met by a rush of warm air laden with the fumes of beer and the smell of food. The room was dimly lighted on two sides by small windows, which deserved scarcely more than the name of portholes. The taproom itself looked like the cabin of a ship. The ceiling and floor, the tables and chairs were all of the same dark-brown wood that covered the walls, along which were ranged beds like bunks.

The host had advanced with many bows to meet his distinguished guests, and had escorted them to the fireplace, where huge blocks of peat were burning. The glow they sent forth served several purposes. It warmed the air, lighted a portion of the room darkened by the heavy rainstorm, and helped to cook three chickens that were beginning to brown on an iron spit over the fire.

As the new arrivals approached the fire, the old woman who had been turning the spit thrust a white cat from her lap and stood up.

The host flung upon a bench the cloaks that had been hung on the backs of two chairs to dry, and hung in their places the cloaks of the baron and his son.

While the elder Wibisma was ordering warming drinks for himself and his people, Nicolas led the negro to the fire.

The shivering boy cowered on the floor near the

ashes and thrust out to the flame first his wet feet shod in red morocco, then his stiffened fingers.

Father and son seated themselves at a table which the maid had spread with a cloth. The baron was not indisposed to question the landlord, a servile, pock-marked dwarf, whose dress was of the same brown color as the woodwork in his taproom, concerning the tree with its strange decorations; but he refrained, for at a table some distance from his sat two burghers of Leyden, one of whom was well known to him, and he had no desire to pick a quarrel in such a place as this.

When Nicolas had taken a survey of the room, he touched his father and said in a low voice:

"Did you notice the men over there? The younger one—he is just lifting the cover of the tankard—is the organist who rescued me from the boys yesterday and lent me his cloak."

"That one there? A handsome young fellow. He might be taken for a painter or something of that sort. Here, landlord, who is the gentleman with the brown hair and large eyes, talking with Herr Allertssohn, the fencing master?"

"It is Herr Wilhelm, with your gracious lordship's permission, the younger son of the collector of taxes, Herr Cornelius, a player or a musician, as they call it."

"Yes, yes," cried the baron. "His father is one of my old Leyden acquaintances. He was a brave and most worthy man before this craze for liberty turned the people's heads. The young man, too, has a face that is good to look at. There is something pure about it—something—it is hard to tell what—what do you think, Nico? Does he not look like our holy Saint Sebastian? Shall I speak to him and thank him for his kindness?"

The baron did not await the answer of his son,

whom he was fond of treating as a friend and equal in age, but rose to express his kindly feeling toward the musician; this laudable purpose, however, received an unexpected check.

The man whom the baron had called Allertssohn had just noticed that the Glippers' cloaks were hanging before the fire, while his own and his friend's had been flung upon a bench. This fact seemed to annoy the Leydener deeply, for as the baron rose he pushed his chair back violently, bent his sturdy body forward, leaned his arms on the table before him, and turned his martial face from the landlord to the nobleman and back again. At last he cried in a loud voice:

"Peter Quatgelat — you — you — if you — you wretched hunchback, who gave you—who gave you the right to throw our cloaks into the corner?"

"Yours, captain," stammered the host, "were already——"

"Hold your tongue, cur!" thundered the other in so loud a voice and with such excitement that the flowing gray mustache on his upper lip shook, and the long, thick beard on his chin trembled. "Hold your tongue! We know better. *Gottes Donner!* You truckle to noblemen's cloaks here! They are of Spanish cut. They look well on a Glipper! Good Dutch cloth is flung into a corner. Oho, oho, brother Crooked-legs, we'll settle you!"

"I beg you, most noble captain——"

"I spit upon your 'most noble,' you most ignoble, you arch scoundrel! First come, first served; it is always so in Holland and always has been since the days of Adam and Eve. Listen well, Crooked-legs! If my 'most noble' cloak and Herr Wilhelm's are not hanging in their old places before I count twenty, something will happen that will not be to your taste. One—two—three——"

The landlord cast a fearful, questioning glance at the nobleman, and as the latter shrugged his shoulders and said audibly: "There is surely room for more than two cloaks before the fire," Quatgelat took the Leydeners' mantles from the bench, and hung them on two chairs that he had drawn up to the fire.

While this was being done the fencing-master slowly continued his counting. When he reached twenty, the landlord had completed his task, but the angry captain still gave him no peace, but said:

"Our reckoning now, man. Wind and rain are not good company, but I know of worse. There is room enough at the fire for four cloaks, and in Holland for all the animals in Noah's ark except Spaniards and the friends of Spaniards. The devil! it has stirred up all the gall in my liver. Follow me to the horses, Herr Wilhelm, or there'll be trouble."

With these last words, the fencing-master turned his starting eyes angrily upon the nobleman.

The latter appeared not to have heard the challenging words, and as the fencing-master left the room he approached the musician unconcernedly, with head erect, and bowing courteously to him, thanked him for the kindness he had shown his son the day before.

"You are really not indebted to me," answered Wilhelm Corneliussohn. "I went to your son's rescue because it does not look well for a number to attack one."

"Then permit me to express my approval of this opinion," said the baron.

"Opinion," repeated the musician with a slight smile, beginning to draw a few notes on the table.

For awhile the baron watched in silence the moving fingers. Then going closer to the young man, he asked:

"Must political differences enter into everything?"

"Yes," answered the other emphatically, and turning quickly toward the older man. "In these times, yes, a thousand times yes. You are not wise to speak to me of opinions, Herr Matenesse."

"Every man," answered the nobleman with a shrug, "has his own opinions and thinks them the right ones, but he ought to respect those of others."

"My lord," broke in the musician, "in these days there can be but *one* opinion among us. Any man who is of Dutch blood and thinks differently from us, I wish to have naught to do with, not even to drink at the same table with him. Pardon me, my lord; my traveling companion has a hot temper, as you have unfortunately learned, and does not like to be kept waiting."

Wilhelm bowed slightly, approached the fireplace, took his and his companion's half-dried cloaks over his arm, flung a coin on the counter, took up a covered cage filled with fluttering birds, and left the room.

The baron looked after him in silence. The plain words and the young man's departure awakened painful sensations in his breast. He believed that he wished for what was right, but at that moment he felt that a stain rested on the cause he supported.

One can bear to be pursued better than to be avoided, and an expression of deep annoyance rested on the nobleman's kindly features as he returned to his son.

Nicolas had heard every word the organist had said, and the blood left his ruddy cheeks as he saw how this man, whose whole appearance had especially attracted him, turned his back upon his father as upon a criminal to be avoided.

The words with which Janus Dousa had left him

the day before recurred to him with greater force, and when the baron was once more seated opposite him, the boy raised his eyes and said hesitatingly, but with touching earnestness and frank concern:

"Father, what did he mean? Father—are they so very wrong in preferring to be Dutch rather than Spanish?"

Wibisma looked with surprise and disapproval at his son, and because he had for a moment felt his own convictions waver, and a blustering word is often of use where there is inability or disinclination to contend with argument, he spoke more sharply to him than he had spoken for years.

"Are you, too, beginning to relish the bait with which Orange lures on the simpletons? Another such word and I will show you how impertinent boys are treated. Here, landlord: what does that foolery on that tree there mean?"

"The burghers, my lord, the Leyden fools are to blame for the mischief, your grace, not I. When the soldiers who had been in the city during the siege went off, they decked the tree in that shameful fashion. I keep this house as a tenant of the elder Herr van der Does, and can have no opinion of my own, for a man must live, but as truly as I hope to die in peace, I am loyal to King Philip."

"Until the Leydeners come out here again," answered Wibisma bitterly. "Did you keep open house during the siege?"

"Yes, my lord; their lordships, the Spaniards, had nothing to complain of in me, and if a poor man's services are not too humble, my gracious lord, they are at your disposal."

"So, so!" muttered the baron and looked attentively at the ill-favored features of the host, whose small eyes glittered with cunning. Then he turned to Nicolas and said:

"Go and look at the blackbirds there in the window for awhile, my son. I have something to say to the landlord."

The lad rose at once and as, instead of looking at the birds, he stared after the two enthusiastic supporters of Holland's liberty, who were riding along the road that led to Delft, he thought of what Janus Dousa had said of the chains that drag men down, and then he thought of the golden chain, the mark of honor, that King Philip had sent his father. Involuntarily, Nicolas looked toward the baron. He was standing whispering earnestly with the landlord. Now he even laid his hand upon his shoulder. Was it right in him to treat thus a man whom he must despise from the bottom of his heart? Or was he—he shuddered as he remembered the word "traitor," which one of the boys had shouted in his ear during the fight before the church.

When the rain moderated the travelers left the tavern. The baron permitted the repulsive host to kiss his hand at parting, but the lad would not suffer him to touch his.

During the remainder of the ride to the Hague few words were exchanged between father and son.

The musician and the fencing-master were less silent on their way to Delft.

Wilhelm had remonstrated mildly with the other for having given too violent expression to his feelings toward the nobleman.

"Right, quite right," answered Allertssohn, whom his friends called "Allerts" for short. "Quite right! My hot blood—oh, my hot blood! You have no idea, Herr Wilhelm— But let it pass."

"No, speak on, meister."

"You will not think better of me, if I do."

"Well then, let us talk of other things."

"No, Wilhelm, I have no reason for being ashamed of it exactly, for no one will call me a coward."

The musician laughed as he exclaimed: "You a coward! How many Spaniards has your Brescian sword there struck down?"

"Run through, sir; run through far oftener than struck down," answered the other. "If the devil calls me out, I shall ask him: 'Foils, sir, or Spanish swords?' But there is one of whom I am afraid; he is my best friend and at the same time my worst enemy; he is a Netherlander like yourself; he is, in short, he is the man who rides beside you. Yes, when rage seizes me, when my beard begins to tremble, the little sense I have leaves me as rapidly as your doves do you when you let them loose. You do not know me, Wilhelm."

"Do I not? How often must one see you in command and visit you at the fencing-school?"

"Tut, tut—I am as calm then as the water in that canal yonder—but when anything goes against my sense of right, when—but how am I to tell you concisely, without an illustration——"

"Go on."

"Well, for instance, when I have to look on and see a toady treated as though he were Sir Upright——"

"It makes you very indignant."

"Indignant! No. I grow as fierce as a tiger and I must not, I must not. Roland, my fore man, may very well——"

"Meister, meister, your beard is beginning to tremble already."

"What were the Glippers thinking when they had their 'noble' cloaks——"

"The landlord took yours and mine from the fire of his own accord."

"That may be! But the weak-kneed ape did it to honor the Spanish toad-eater. It galled me. I could not let it pass."

"Nor did you keep your anger to yourself, and it surprised me to see how patiently the baron took your abuse."

"That's just it!" cried the fencing-master, and his beard began to quiver ominously. "That's what drove me from the tavern, that's why I fled from myself. That—that—Roland, my fore man!"

"I do not understand you."

"You do not? How should you; but I will explain to you. When you are as old as I am, young man, you will find it out too. There are few perfectly sound trees in a forest, few horses without defect, few swords without blemish, and there's scarcely a man who has passed forty and has not some worm gnawing at his heart. Some gnaw quietly, others more sharply, and mine—mine—Do you want to take a look here into my heart?"

The fencing-master struck his broad breast as he spoke and went on excitedly, without waiting for his companion's reply:

"You know me and my life, Herr Wilhelm. My calling is a knightly one. My life is based upon the sword. Do you know a better blade or a surer hand than mine? Do my soldiers obey me? Have I spared my blood in battle before the red walls and towers behind us? No! by my fore man, Roland, no, a thousand times, no!"

"Who denies it, Meister Allerts? But tell me, what do you mean by your cry: 'Roland, my fore man?"

"Another time, Wilhelm; you must not interrupt me now. Listen instead while I tell you where the worm gnaws. I repeat then: my calling is a knightly one, and yet, if when a man like Wibisma,

who learned from my father how to use a sword, treats me cavalierly and arouses my anger, I were to assume my rights and challenge him, what would he do? He would laugh and ask: 'What will the bout cost, Herr Fencing-Master Allerts? Have you sharpened rapiers also?' Perhaps he would say nothing at all—we have just seen how he bore himself awhile ago. His glance slipped by me like an eel and he had wax in his ears. Whether I rail at him or a cur bark at him, is all the same to him. But if a Renneberg or a Brederode had been in my place how quickly Wibisma would have drawn his sword from its sheath, for he knows how to fight and is no coward. But I—I? No one likes to be struck in the face, and, as truly as my father was a brave man, the deepest insult is easier to bear than the feeling that one is esteemed too low to be able to offer an insult. You see, Wilhelm, when the Glipper looked past me——"

"The beard lost its composure."

"It is all very well for you to jest, you do not know——"

"But I do, Herr Allerts; I quite understand."

"And you also understand why I took myself and my sword outside so quickly?"

"Thoroughly; but stop a moment. The pigeons are fluttering so that they must need air."

The fencing-master brought his horse to a standstill, and as Wilhelm lifted the dripping cloth from the cage that rested before him on the horse's neck asked:

"How can a man put up with such tame creatures? If you wish to steal time from your music to give to feathered folk, why not tame falcons? It is a knightly craft and one that I can teach you."

"Leave my pigeons in peace," answered Wilhelm.

"They are not as insignificant as you think, and in many a war, which is surely a knightly pastime, they have proved useful. Remember Haarlem. It is beginning to rain again. I wish my cloak were not so short; I would like to spread it over the pigeons."

"Truly you look like Goliath in David's cloak."

"It is my scholar's cloak; my other one I gave to young Wibisma yesterday."

"The Spanish green-finch?"

"I have already told you of the brawl between the boys."

"True, true. And the young fool has kept your cloak?"

"You came for me and would not wait. They doubtless returned it shortly after our departure."

"And their gracious lordships expect your thanks because the young noble accepted it!"

"No, no; the baron expressed his thanks to me."

"But they won't make your cape any longer. Take my cloak, Wilhelm. I have no pigeons to shelter, and my skin is thicker than yours."

CHAPTER VII.

The first stormy day was followed by a second and a third.

Whitish mist and gray fog hung over the meadows. The cold, damp northwest wind drove the heavy clouds together and darkened the sky. From the leads on the steep roofs of Leyden, tiny rivulets rushed into the streets below. The water in the canals and ditches grew turbid and rose to the edge of the banks. Dripping and freezing men and women hurried past each other without greeting, while the two storks pressed closer to each other in the nest and thought of the warm south, regretting their premature return to the cold and damp plains of the Netherlands.

In anxious minds increased the dread of what must come. The rain caused fear to spring up in the hearts of many burghers as rapidly as it caused the young grain to grow in the fields. In many a taproom were held conversations that sounded anything but hopeful—in others men inveighed against resistance as folly, or loudly demanded the desertion of the Prince of Orange and of freedom.

Whoever wished to find a happy face in Leyden in these days would have sought long in vain, and last of all could he hope to find it in the house of Burgomaster van der Werff.

Three days had elapsed since the departure of Herr Peter; indeed the fourth was half gone, and the burgomaster had not yet returned, nor had his

household received any message, any word of explanation.

Frau Maria had donned her gown of pale blue cloth cut square in the neck and adorned with Mechlin lace, for her husband especially liked to see her in this gown, and he would surely return to-day.

The spray of yellow wall-flower at her breast she had cut from the blossoming plant in her bedroom window, and Barbara had helped her in arranging her heavy hair.

It still lacked an hour of noon when the young wife entered her husband's room with a white dust cloth in her hand. She went first to the window down which the streaming rain dripped in countless, writhing, snakelike lines, pressed her forehead to the glass and looked out into the deserted street.

The water stood between the smooth red bricks of the pavement. A porter clattered by in heavy wooden shoes, a maid-servant hurried along wrapped in her hooded cloak, a cobbler's apprentice with a pair of high boots slung across his shoulder sprang from puddle to puddle and carefully avoided the dry places; no horseman appeared.

It was almost supernaturally still in the house and in the street; she could hear nothing but the splashing of the rain. Until the sound of hoofs made itself heard Maria could not expect her husband; nor did she look into the distance, but gazed dreamily into the street and at the ceaseless rain.

The room was carefully heated for the master's return, but Maria felt a cold draught through the window cracks. She shivered, and as she drew back into the dusky room it seemed to her as though it must always be gloomy like this and that no bright days could ever come again.

Minutes passed before she remembered the purpose that had brought her here. She began to dust the writing table, the piled-up papers, and the other objects in the room. At last she came to the pistols, which Peter had not taken with him on his journey.

Above the weapons hung the picture of her husband's first wife. The picture was in far greater need of dusting than the pistols, for until now Maria had always avoided touching it.

To-day she plucked up courage, placed herself before it, and looked steadfastly at the youthful features of the woman with whom Peter had been happy. She was fascinated by the brown eyes that looked out at her from the pleasant face.

Yes, the woman up there looked happy—almost insolently happy.

How much more had Peter given to his first wife than to her?

This thought cut her to the quick, and without moving her lips she addressed a succession of questions to the silent portrait, which continued to look down serenely and confidently at her from its plain frame.

Once it seemed as though the full lips quivered. Once it seemed as though the eyes moved. A cold shudder passed over Maria; she began to be afraid, but she could not tear herself from the picture.

She gazed upward with wide-open eyes.

She did not stir, and her breath came faster.

Then her glance grew more intent.

On the dead wife's brow lay a shadow.

Had the painter meant to indicate some care that was pressing upon her, or was what she saw only dust that had settled upon the canvas?

She drew a chair toward the picture and set her foot upon the seat. Her skirt pulled up as she did

so. Blushing, as though other than painted eyes were looking upon her, she drew it down over the white stocking, and then with a rapid movement mounted the chair.

She now stood face to face with the picture. The cloth in Maria's trembling hand passed over Eva's forehead and brushed the shadow from the rosy skin. Then she wiped the dust from the frame and from the canvas and noticed the signature of the artist to whom the picture owed its origin. "Artjen of Leyden," he called himself, and his careful hand had painstakingly reproduced even the smallest details. The silver chain with the blue turquoises on the round neck she knew well. Peter had given this same chain to her as a wedding gift, and she had worn it to the altar, but the little diamond cross that hung from it she had never seen. The gold buckle at Eva's belt had been hers since her last birthday, but it was badly bent and the blunt points could with difficulty pierce the heavy ribbon.

"She had everything while it was new," she said to herself. "The ornaments! What do I care for them! But the heart, the heart—how much love has she left for me in Peter's heart?"

Against her will these words kept echoing in her mind, and she was forced to summon all her strength to keep from crying.

"If he would only come, if he would only come!" was the cry of her sorely troubled soul.

The door opened unperceived by her.

Barbara entered, and spoke her name softly and with kindly reproach.

Maria started, and flushing said:

"Please give me your hand. I wish to get down. I have just finished. The dust was something disgraceful."

When she was again standing on the floor the widow said to her:

"How red your cheeks are! Listen, dear child, listen to me!"

Barbara was interrupted in the midst of her reproof, for the knocker sounded loudly at the front door and Maria hastened to the window.

The widow followed her, and after a hasty glance into the street cried:

"It is Wilhelm Corneliussohn, the musician. He has been to Delft. His mother told me so. Perhaps he brings news of Peter. I will send him up to you, but he must first tell me downstairs what news he brings. If you need me you will find me with Lieschen. She is hot and her eyes pain her. I am afraid she is going to have a fever."

Barbara left the room. Maria pressed her hands to her burning cheeks and walked slowly back and forth until there came a knock and the musician entered.

After the first greetings, the young wife asked eagerly:

"And did you see my husband in Delft?"

"Yes, Frau Bürgemeisterin," answered Wilhelm, "night before last."

"Then tell me——"

"At once, at once! I bring you a whole budget of messages. First from your lady mother."

"Is she well?"

"Well and cheerful. Worthy Doctor Groot is also hale and hearty."

"And my husband?"

"I found him with the doctor. Doctor Groot sends all sorts of kind messages to you. Yesterday and the day before we had music at his house. He always has the latest things from Italy, and when we try this motet here——"

"Later, Herr Wilhelm. Tell me first what my husband——"

"The Herr Bürgemeister came to the doctor with a commission from the prince. He was in a hurry and could not wait for the singing. It went finely. You need have no concern about the tableture.* If you, with your magnificent voice will only——"

"I beg of you, Herr Wilhelm——"

"No, my dear lady, you must not refuse. Herr Groot says that as a girl you sang the soprano parts as no one else could, and if you and Frau von Nordwyk and Herr van Aken's eldest daughter——"

"But my dear Herr Wilhelm," cried the burgomaster's wife with growing impatience, "I am not asking now about your motets and tabletures but about my husband."

Wilhelm looked, half amazed, half alarmed, into the young wife's face. Then smiling at his lack of tact, he shook his head and said with good-natured contrition:

"Forgive me, please; it is often true that even little things seem all important to us when our souls are filled with them. To your ears, a word about your absent husband must sound sweeter than all my music. I ought to have remembered it sooner. Well then; the bürgemeister is well and has conferred much with the prince. Before he left for Dortrecht yesterday morning he gave me this letter for you and commissioned me to place it in your hands with most affectionate greetings."

The musician handed a letter to Maria. She took it quickly and said:

"Do not be vexed, Herr Wilhelm, but we will talk about your motet to-morrow or whenever you wish; but to-day——"

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* An ancient mode of indicating musical sounds by letters instead of notes.

"To-day you must give your time to this letter," interrupted Wilhelm. "It is only natural. The messenger has fulfilled his commission and the musician will try his fortune with his music another time."

As soon as the young man had taken his departure Maria retired to her room, seated herself at her window, hurriedly opened her husband's letter and read:

"My dear and faithful Wife: Meister Wilhelm Corneliussohn, of Leyden, will carry this letter to you. I am well, but it was hard for me to leave you on the anniversary of our wedding day. The weather is very bad. I found the prince in deep distress, but we do not give up hope, and if the good Lord aids us, and every man does his duty, all may yet be well. I must go to Dortrecht to-day. What I have to do there is of great importance. You must be patient, for it may be many days before my return.

"If the messenger of the Council comes, give him the papers that lie on the desk, on the right-hand side, under the smaller weight. Give my love to Barbara and the children. If you need money, ask Van Hout in my name for the balance that is due me; he will know. If you are lonely, go and see his wife or Frau von Nordwyk; they would be glad to see you. Buy as much meal, butter, cheese, and smoked meat as is possible. One cannot tell what may come. Let Barbara advise you. Relying upon your obedience,

"Your faithful husband,

"Peter Adrianssohn van der Werff."

Maria read this letter rapidly at first, then a second time more slowly, sentence by sentence, to

the end. Disappointed, troubled, hurt, she folded it, and without herself knowing why, took the spray of wall-flower from her breast and tossed it into the peat-basket by the fireplace. Then she took from a chest a pretty carved box, placed it upon the table, opened it, and laid within it her husband's letter.

Long after it had been placed with other papers Maria stood before the casket and gazed thoughtfully at its contents.

At last she laid her hand upon the lid to close it, but she hesitated, and took up a bundle of letters that lay at the bottom of the box, together with some gold and silver coins, gifts of her godfather and godmother, modest trinkets, and a withered rose.

She drew a chair up to the table, seated herself, and began to read. She knew the letters well. A noble and promising young man had written them to her sister, his affianced wife. They were written from Jena, where he had gone to complete his studies in jurisprudence. In every word spoke the lover's ardent longing, in every line the passion that had filled the writer's heart. Often the language of the young scholar, who, as a student under Doctor Groot, had won his bride in Delft when she was still scarcely more than a child, rose to a lofty flight.

As Maria read, she could see Jacoba's sweet face, and the handsome, dreamy features of her husband. She remembered their joyous wedding, her brother-in-law's friend, upon whom nature had lavished every gift, who had come with him to Holland as his groomsman, and who on leaving had given her the rose that lay there in the casket. His voice had blended with hers as no other had, from no other lips had she ever heard such poetic language,

no eyes as lustrous as this young Thuringian nobleman's had ever looked into hers.

After the wedding Georg von Dornburg had returned to his home and the young couple had gone to Haarlem. She had never heard anything more of the stranger, and her sister and her husband were soon to be silenced forever. Like the majority of the inhabitants of that noble and ill-fated city, they met their death at the hands of the Spanish cutthroats. Nothing was left her but the loving memory of her beloved sister and the letters that she held in her hand.

In them spoke *love*, the true, exalted love that can speak with the tongues of angels and can remove mountains.

There lay her husband's letter. Pitiful little letter! She shrank from opening it again as she returned the precious mementoes to the box, and yet her heart rose as she thought of Peter. She knew that she loved him, and that his heart belonged to her. But she was not satisfied, she was not happy, for he had for her only warm affection or fatherly kindness, and she wished to be loved in a very different way. The pupil, even the friend, of the scholarly Doctor Groot; the young girl who had grown up in association with learned men; the enthusiastic lover of her country felt that she was able to give her husband far more than he asked of her.

Sentimental emotions and extravagant phrases she had never expected from the grave man engaged in vigorous action, but she did expect that he would understand all that was lofty and noble in her, and that he would allow her to participate in his struggles and be the sharer of his thoughts and feelings. That things were very different was shown her again by the meager letter she had received to-day.

He had been a stanch friend of her dead father. Her brother-in-law, too, had attached himself with the enthusiasm of youth, to the older and more experienced champion of liberty. When he had spoken of Peter to Maria it had always been in terms of the warmest admiration and affection. Soon after the decease of her father, and the violent death of the young couple, Peter had come to Delft, and when he sympathized with her and strove to comfort her, it was in strong, tender words to which she could cling as to an anchor, in the anguish of her soul. The gallant Leydener came more and more often to Delft and was always a guest at the Groots' house. When the men sat together in consultation Maria was permitted to fill their glasses and to be present at their deliberations. Words flew back and forth and often seemed to her to be neither clear nor wise; but what Van der Werff said was always sensible and a child could understand his simple, forcible language. He seemed to her like an oak among swaying willows. She knew of many and perilous journeys that he took in the service of the prince and awaited their outcome with a beating heart.

More than once had she thought of how sweet it must be to be borne through life in the strong arms of this steadfast man, and when he stretched out these arms to her she came to him as gladly and proudly as a squire when summoned by his king to receive knighthood. She thought of that bygone time, and every hope with which she had followed him to Leyden rose vividly before her.

Her bridegroom had promised her not a spring-time but a happy summer and autumn at his side. She could not help thinking of this comparison and of how very different from what she had expected her life with him had been. Tumult, anxiety, con-

flict, a constant alternation of hard work and exhaustion—this was the life to which he had called her at his side, without even showing the desire to grant her a share in his cares and troubles. Things must not, could not continue as they were. All that had seemed beautiful and enjoyable to her in her parents' house was wanting here. Music, poetry that had elevated her soul, intellectual conversation that had developed her mind, were not to be found in her new home. Barbara's friendliness could never make up for those lost pleasures; for her husband's entire love she would have relinquished everything —but what had become of this love?

With these bitter feelings she replaced the casket in the chest and obeyed the summons to dinner. At the great table she found only Adrian and the servants, for Barbara was watching beside Lieschen.

Never had she seemed to herself so lonely, so desolate, so useless as to-day. Of what good was she here? Barbara presided over kitchen and cellar, and she—she only stood in her husband's way in the fulfillment of his duties toward city and state.

These were her thoughts when the knocker once more sounded at the door. She stepped to the window. It was the doctor. Lieschen had grown worse and she, her mother, had not even asked about the little one.

"The children, the children!" she murmured; her listless features grew animated and her heart was lighter, as she said to herself:

"I promised Peter to care for them as though they were my own, and I will be true to what I took upon myself."

With glad emotion she went to the darkened sick-room and closed the door sharply behind her. Doctor Bontius looked around at her with an air of reproof, and Barbara said:

"Gently, gently! Lieschen has just fallen asleep."

Maria approached the bed, but the physician motioned her away and asked:

"Have you had the miliary fever?"

"No."

"Then you must not come into the room again. No other help is needed where Frau Barbara is nurse."

The burgomaster's wife made no reply and went out into the hall again. Her heart was very heavy. She felt like a stranger in her husband's house. Some impulse urged her to go out of doors, and when she had wrapped her cloak about her and was descending the stairs, the smell of leather which rose from the bales in the storeroom on the ground floor seemed to her intolerable, although she had scarcely noticed it before. She longed to be back with her mother, with her friends in Delft, in her quiet, airy home. For the first time she ventured to call herself unhappy, and as she walked on through the streets with downcast eyes in the face of the wind, she struggled vainly against a dark, mysterious power that forced her to review minutely everything that had resulted differently from her expectations.

CHAPTER VIII.

After the musician had left the burgomaster's wife he betook himself to the house of young Matenesse van Wibisma's aunt to get his cloak, which had not been returned to him. He was not accustomed to think much about his dress, but he was glad, nevertheless, that the rain kept people within doors, for the effect of the outgrown cape on his shoulders was far from pleasing. Wilhelm must indeed have looked as if he were in anything but affluent circumstances, for as he entered Fräulein van Hoogstraten's spacious and stately hall, he was received by the house steward, Belotti, as condescendingly as though he were a beggar.

The Neopolitan, in whose mouth the guttural Dutch sounded like the rasping in the throat of a singer with a cold, soon changed his tone, however, when Wilhelm quietly explained in good Italian the object of his visit. The servant's lofty bearing melted into eager welcome before the beloved sound of his mother tongue. He began to talk with Wilhelm about his native land, but the musician gave him only curt replies and requested him a second time to bring him his cloak.

Belotti led him politely to a cabinet that opened into the great hall, removed his cloak for him, and went upstairs. As minute after minute and finally a whole quarter of an hour passed and neither servant nor cloak appeared the young man began to lose his patience, and the leaded panes upon which

his fingers were drumming loudly were threatened with imminent destruction, when the door opened. Wilhelm was conscious of it, but he went on drumming with redoubled violence, in order to show the Italian very plainly that the time had seemed long to him. But he hastily withdrew his fingers from the glass, for behind him a musical, girlish voice said, in excellent Dutch:

"Have you finished your war-song, *mein Herr?* Belotti is bringing your cloak."

Wilhelm had turned and was looking, confused and speechless, into the face of the young noblewoman who stood directly in front of him. The features were not unfamiliar to him, and yet years do not make even a goddess younger, and the daughters of man grow taller and not smaller; but the lady whom he thought to see before him and whom he had known well in Rome and had never forgotten had been older and taller than the young girl who looked so strangely like her and who seemed ill pleased by his astonished and searching gaze. She motioned haughtily to the steward and said, in Italian:

"Give this gentleman his cloak, Belotti, and tell him that I came to ask his pardon for your forgetfulness."

Henrika van Hoogstraten turned toward the door as she said this, but Wilhelm followed her with a few quick strides, exclaiming:

"No, no, fräulein! It is for me to apologize. But if you have ever been amazed by a resemblance——"

"Anything but to look like other people!" cried the girl with a gesture of protestation.

"Ah, fräulein, and yet——"

"Say no more!" interrupted Henrika with such irritation that the musician looked at her in surprise.

"One sheep looks like another, and out of a hundred peasants twenty have faces alike. All goods by the dozen are cheap."

As soon as Wilhelm heard some reason given for her anger, he recovered his usual calm bearing and answered quietly:

"But nature creates the most beautiful things in pairs. Remember the Madonna's eyes."

"You are a Catholic?"

"A Calvinist, fräulein."

"And devoted to the cause of the prince?"

"Say rather, to the cause of liberty."

"That explains your drumming the war-song."

"It was a quiet gavotte at first, but impatience quickened the time. I am a musician, fräulein."

"But not a drummer, I presume. The poor window panes!"

"They are an instrument like any other, and in playing we seek to express what we feel."

"Let me thank you then, for not having broken the panes to bits."

"That would have been an ugly thing to do, fräulein, and art ceases where ugliness begins."

"Do you think that the song that was concealed in your cloak—it fell out and Nico picked it up—beautiful or ugly?"

"This one here or the other?"

"The "Geusenlied," I mean."

"It is wild, but no more unlovely than the roar of the tempest."

"It is repulsive, coarse and revolting."

"I call it strong and masterful."

"And the other melody?"

"Absolve me from passing judgment; I composed it myself. You know how to read music, fräulein?"

"A little."

"And were you displeased with my attempt?"

"Not displeased, but I find mournful passages in this choral as in all Calvinistic hymns."

"It depends upon how they are executed."

"In your churches they are intended for the voices of shopkeepers' wives and washerwomen."

"Every hymn, if it is only sincerely felt, will give wings to the souls of the simple people who sing it; and whatever rises to heaven from the depths of the human heart cannot be ill pleasing to the dear God to whom it is addressed. And then——"

"Well?"

"If this anthem is worthy of being preserved, it may be that a matchless choir——"

"Will sing it to you, you mean?"

"No, fräulein; it has fulfilled its destiny if it is given but one fine rendering. I should not wish to be absent, but this wish is secondary to the other."

"How modest!"

"I think I have had my greatest enjoyment beforehand in its composition."

Henrika looked sympathetically at the artist and said in a gentler tone:

"I am sorry for you. Why should I deny that your music pleases me? It appeals to the heart in many passages, but how it will be distorted in your churches. Your heresy destroys all art. The works of the great masters are an abomination to you, and it will be no better with the noble music that has sprung up here in the Netherlands."

"I venture to believe the contrary."

"You are wrong, wrong, for if your cause triumphs, which the Virgin forbid, there will soon be nothing in Holland but warehouses, workshops, and bare meeting-houses from which even singing and the organ will be banished at last."

"By no means, fräulein. Athens did not become

the home of art until she had won her freedom from the Persians."

"Athens and Leyden!" she answered scornfully. "There are owls on the tower of Pancratius to be sure. But where are we to find Minerva?"

As Henrika spoke these words laughingly, her name was called for the third time by a shrill female voice. She broke off in the middle of a sentence and said:

"I must go. I will keep this music."

"You will be honoring me by accepting it, and will you permit me to bring you more?"

"Henrika!" the voice again called from the stairs, and the young girl answered quickly:

"You may give Belotti whatever you choose, but soon, for I shall not be here much longer."

Wilhelm gazed after Henrika. She walked through the wide hall and up the stairs no less quickly and composedly than she had spoken, and again he thought of his friend in Rome.

The old Italian had also followed Henrika with his eyes. When she had disappeared around the last turn of the broad staircase he shrugged his shoulders, turned to the musician, and said with unaffected concern:

"It is not well with the fräulein. Always in a tumult, always like a loaded pistol, and always these terrible headaches. She was very different when she came here."

"The fräulein is ill?"

"My mistress will not believe it," answered the servant. "But what we see, the *camarista* and I, we see. Now red, now white, no rest at night, and hardly a wing of chicken and a bit of salad at dinner."

"Does the doctor share your uneasiness?"

"The doctor! Doctor Fleuriel is no longer here.

When the Spaniards came he moved to Ghent, and since then my mistress will tolerate no one but the barber who bleeds her. The doctors here are all friendly to the Prince of Orange, and are all heretics. There, she is calling again; I will send the cloak to your house, and if you should ever feel inclined to speak my language, just knock at the door. This calling, this everlasting calling! It wears upon the fräulein too."

When Wilhelm stepped out into the street it was raining but slightly. The clouds had begun to scatter, and from a bit of blue sky the sun shone, bright and hot, down on the Nobelstrasse. A rainbow shimmered above the roofs, but the musician had no eyes for the beautiful spectacle. The dazzling light in the wet streets did not gladden him. The glaring rays of the sun could last but a short time, for they were "drawing water." All that surrounded him seemed unstable and confused. Beside the beautiful picture that he preserved as the most sacred of his recollections, and only allowed his thoughts to dwell upon in his happiest moments, another picture was forcing itself. His real jewel was in danger of being exchanged for a stone, the value of which he did not know. With the former perfect harmony mingled disturbingly another in a similar but different key. How could he think of Isabella without remembering Henrika? At least, he had not heard the young girl sing, and so the memory of Isabella's songs remained undisturbed. He blamed himself for having promised, from an impulse of vanity, to send other music to the haughty young lady of Spanish sympathies. He had treated Herr Matenesse van Wibisma rudely on account of his opinions, but upon her who laughed at all that he held sacred, he was ready to force himself, because she was a woman, and it was sweet

to hear one's creations praised by pretty lips. "Hercules flings aside his club and seats himself at the distaff when Omphale beckons, and the beautiful Esther, and Herod's daughter—" murmured Wilhelm angrily to himself. He felt deeply disturbed and betook himself to his quiet little gable-room near the dove-cote.

"Something unpleasant must have happened to him in Delft," thought his father.

"Why doesn't he relish the broiled flounders to-day?" wondered his mother, as they sat together at dinner. Each felt that something was depressing the darling of the house, but neither attempted to inquire into the why or wherefore, for both knew the moods to which he was often subject for half a day at a time.

When Wilhelm had fed his pigeons he returned to his room. He paced restlessly back and forth at first; then he seized his violin and wove together all the melodies he had heard from Isabella's lips. Seldom had his playing been so melting, and then again so wild and passionate, and his mother, who heard him from the kitchen, turned the twirling-stick more and more rapidly, and then thrusting it into the firmly knit dough, murmured as she rubbed her hands on her apron:

"How the thing wails and exults! Let him play, in heaven's name, if it gives him any relief; but gut is expensive, and he's sure to break two strings."

Toward evening Wilhelm was obliged to go to the drill of the rifle corps to which he belonged. His little company had been ordered to mount guard at the Hoogewoort Gate. As they marched up the Nobelstrasse he heard through an open window of the Hoogstraten mansion a woman singing in a deep, clear voice. He listened, and as he noticed with a shudder how much Henrika's voice

resembled Isabella's, he ordered the drums to be beaten.

The next morning a servant appeared from the Hoogstraten house and handed Wilhelm a note, in which he was briefly requested to be at the Nobelstrasse that afternoon at two, not a moment earlier or later.

He did not wish to say "yes;" he could not say "no," and at the hour appointed he was at the house.

Henrika awaited him in the cabinet off from the hall. She looked graver than the day before, and the deep shadows under her eyes and the high color in her cheeks reminded Wilhelm of Belotti's fears for her health. After returning his salutation she said quickly and without further ceremony:

"I have something to say to you. Sit down. To be brief, the way you saluted me yesterday has brought an idea to my mind. I must look very much like some other woman, and you met her in Italy. You may, perhaps, be thinking of some one who is very near to me and of whom I have lost all trace. Answer me frankly, for I am not asking out of mere curiosity. Where did you meet her?"

"In Lugano. We drove to Milan with the same *vetturino*. I met her later in Rome and saw her daily for months."

"Then you know her well. Do you still think the resemblance striking on seeing me a second time?"

"Marvelous in the extreme."

"Then I must have a double. Is she a native of this country?"

"She called herself an Italian, but she understood Dutch, for she often used to look over my books and used to follow the conversations I carried on with painters who were countrymen of mine. I think she is a German of noble family."

"An adventuress, then? And her name?"

"Isabella; but no one would be justified in calling her an adventuress."

"Was she married?"

"There was something matronly in her stately appearance, but she never spoke to me of a husband. The old Italian woman, her duenna, always called her Donna Isabella, but she had little more knowledge of her past than I had."

"Good or bad, you mean?"

"None at all."

"And what was she doing in Rome?"

"She was devoting herself to singing, of which art she was mistress; but she still continued her studies and made great progress in Rome. It was my privilege to instruct her in counterpoint."

"And she appeared in public as a singer?"

"Yes and no. A foreign prelate of high standing was her patron and his recommendation opened all doors to her, even the Palestrina's. The principal parts in church music were given to her, and she did not refuse to sing in great houses, but she never appeared for money. I know it, as I was the only one she would have accompany her. My playing was agreeable to her and so, through her I gained access to many great houses."

"Was she rich?"

"No, fräulein. She had beautiful clothes and fine jewels, but she was obliged to economize. From time to time money came to her from Florence, but the gold pieces slipped quickly through her fingers, for while she lived modestly and scarcely ate enough for a bird, although her delicate health required more strengthening fare, she was extravagant to folly whenever she saw a poor artist in distress, and she knew most of them, for she did not hesitate to sit with them over their wine when I was present."

"With men devoted to music and art?"

"True artists of noble sentiments. At times she surpassed us all in extravagant spirits."

"At times?"

"Yes, at times only, for she had sad, painfully sad hours and days, but as rain and sunshine succeed each other in an April day despair in life and joy in living alternately gained the mastery over her."

"A strange character. Do you know what has become of her?"

"No, fräulein. One evening she received from Milan a letter that must have contained bad news, and the following she was gone, without saying farewell.

"And you never attempted to follow her?"

Wilhelm reddened and answered constrainedly:

"I had not the right to do so. And besides, shortly after her departure I was taken ill—seriously ill."

"You loved her?"

"*Gnädiges Fräulein*, I must beg you——"

"You did love her! And did she return your affection?"

"You and I have known each other only since yesterday, Fräulein van Hoogstraten."

"Forgive me! But if you respect my wishes this will not be the last time we shall see each other, although my double is not the lady of whom I was thinking—*auf wiedersehen*. You see, the calls for me have begun again. You have aroused my interest in your strange friend, and another time you must tell me more about her. But one thing more: May a modest girl talk with impunity to you about her?"

"Most assuredly, if you are not afraid to talk about a noble woman who had no other protector than herself."

"And you, don't forget yourself," cried Henrika as she left the room.

The musician went thoughtfully home. Was Isabella a relative of this young girl? He had told Henrika almost all that he knew of her outward circumstances and they, perhaps, gave him the same right that many others in Rome had taken, to call her an adventuress. The word wounded him, and Henrika's question, whether he loved the foreigner, disturbed him and impressed him as importunate and unseemly. Yes, he had been seized with a deep passion for Isabella; it had been hard for him to be nothing more to her than a good comrade and trusty friend. It had cost him a severe struggle to hide his feelings from her, and he knew that but for the fear of a scornful dismissal, he would have yielded and declared his love. The old wounds broke out anew as he thought of the time when she had left Rome suddenly and without taking leave of him.

After barely recovering from a severe illness, he had returned home pale and broken, and it was many a month before he could again take true pleasure in his work. At first the thought of her contained nothing but bitterness, but after a silent, a persistent struggle he had succeeded if not in forgetting her, at least in separating the bitterness from the pure and sweet delight of remembering her.

Now the old battle was beginning anew, but he did not mean to yield and he did not cease to call Isabella's image to his mind in all its beauty.

Henrika returned to her aunt in deep excitement. Was the adventuress of whom Wilhelm had spoken the only creature whom she had loved with all the intensity of her ardent nature? Was Isabella her lost sister? Many things spoke against it, but it

was still possible. She tortured herself with questions, and the less peace her aunt gave her, the more unendurable grew the headache, the more plainly she felt that the fever against which she had been struggling for days would conquer her.

CHAPTER IX.

On the evening of the third day that followed Wilhelm's interview with Henrika, his way led him through the Nobelstrasse and past the Hoogstraten mansion.

Before he reached it he saw two gentlemen, preceded by a servant bearing a lantern, cross the causeway toward the house.

Wilhelm watched them attentively. The servant raised the knocker and the light from his lantern fell upon the men's faces. Both were known to him.

The small, dapper old gentleman with the peaked hat and the short black velvet cloak was the Abbé Picard, a lively Parisian, who had come to Leyden ten years before, and who gave French lessons in the wealthy families of the town. He had also been Wilhelm's teacher, but the musician's father would have nothing to do with the clever abbé, for it was said that he had left his beloved France on account of some doubtful transactions, and Herr Cornelius suspected him of being a Spanish spy. The other gentleman, a gray-haired man of medium height and unusual stoutness, who required much cloth for his fur-trimmed mantle, was the Antwerp representative of the great Italian mercantile house of Bonvisi, Signor Lamperi, who came every year with the storks and swallows to Leyden for a few weeks on business, and was a welcome guest in every ap-room as an untiring narrator of funny stories. Be-

fore the two entered the house they were joined by a third gentleman, preceded by two lackeys with lanterns. A wide cloak enveloped his tall figure; he too was an old man and no stranger to Wilhelm, for Monseigneur Gloria, who came frequently to Leyden from Haarlem, was a patron of music, and when the young musician had started on his journey to Italy, had provided him in spite of his heretical faith, with valuable letters of introduction.

Wilhelm continued on his way as the house door closed behind the three gentlemen. The steward, Belotti, had told him the day before that the fräulein seemed to him very ill, but as the old lady was receiving guests, he concluded that her niece must be feeling better.

The first story of the Hoogstraten mansion was brilliantly lighted that evening; in the second story a soft, steady light shone from a single window upon the Nobelstrasse, but the occupant of this room sat with feverish eyes beside a heavy table and pressed her forehead upon its marble top. Henrika was quite alone in the spacious and lofty apartment which her aunt had assigned her. Behind curtains of faded brocade stood her bedstead, a heavy structure of abnormal width. The rest of the furniture was large and had once been splendid. Every chair, every table looked as though it had been taken from some deserted banqueting-hall. Nothing needful was lacking in this room, yet it was anything but home-like and habitable, and no one would have guessed that its occupant was a young girl, had not a great, gilded harp leaned against the long, hard couch beside the fireplace.

Henrika's face was burning, but her feet resting on the uncarpeted floor of colored stone were freezing, although she had wrapped a shawl about her lower limbs.

Shortly after the three gentlemen had entered the house, a woman's form ascended the stairs that led from the first to the second story. In her over excited state of mind, Henrika heard the soft tread of the satin shoes and the rustle of the silken train, long before the approaching figure had reached the room, and breathing more quickly, she drew herself erect.

A thin hand opened the door without knocking, and old Fräulein Van Hoogstraten advanced straight toward her niece.

The aged lady had once been beautiful, but her appearance was now strange and unpleasing.

The bent, haggard form was clad in a long trailing gown of heavy pink silk. The small head almost disappeared in the ruff, a large structure of extraordinary height and width. Upon the sallow skin displayed by the low-cut neck of her dress, hung long chains of pearls and sparkling jewels, and on the false, reddish-yellow curls rested a turban of blue velvet adorned with ostrich plumes. A strong odor of perfumes preceded her. She herself must have found it overpowering, for the huge, glittering fan in her hand was in constant motion and was waved with still greater violence when Henrika in reply to her sharp: "Be quick, be quick!" returned a decided "No, *ma tante*."

The old lady, however, did not allow herself to be disturbed by this refusal and only repeated her "Be quick, be quick!" with greater decision, and added impressively in explanation:

"Monsigneur has come and wishes to hear you sing."

"I am deeply honored," answered the girl, "deeply honored, but how often must I repeat: I will not come."

"May I ask why not, my beauty?" said the old lady.

"Because I am not fit for company," answered Henrika vehemently; "because my head aches and my eyes burn, because I cannot sing to-night, and because—because—because—I implore you to leave me in peace."

Old Fräulein van Hoogstraten let her fan fall and asked coldly:

"Were you singing two hours ago—yes or no?"

"Yes."

"Then the headache cannot be so bad and Denise will dress you."

"If she comes, I will send her away. When I took up the harp awhile ago I did so to drive away the pain by singing. It relieved it for a few moments, but my head is throbbing all the harder now."

"A mere excuse."

"Believe what you choose. For the rest—if I felt as well as a squirrel in the woods, I would not go down to your guests. I shall stay here. My word for it, and I am a Hoogstraten as well as you."

Henrika had risen and looked at her oppressor with an unnatural light in her eyes. The old woman waved her fan more rapidly and her prominent chin trembled. Then she said shortly:

"Your word of honor! Then you will not? You will not?"

"Certainly not," cried the girl with undutiful resolution.

"Every one to his taste," answered the old woman. "But there is such a thing as going too far. Your father will not thank you."

With these words Fräulein van Hoogstraten gathered up her long train and advanced to the door. There she stopped and looked around questioningly at Henrika. The latter did not fail to notice

her aunt's hesitation, but deliberately turned her back upon her without deigning any reply to the covert threat.

As soon as the door had closed the girl sank back into her chair, pressed her forehead against the marble top of the table, and let it rest there for a long time. Then she started up as suddenly and violently as though obeying an imperative summons, threw back the lid of her trunk, tossed the stockings, bodices, and shoes that were in her way in a circle upon the floor, and did not rise again until she had found some sheets of writing paper, which she had placed among her other belongings before leaving her father's castle.

As she rose from her kneeling posture she was seized with giddiness, but she kept on her feet, placed upon the table first the white sheets together with a music book, then a ponderous inkstand which had been in her room for several days, and then seated herself at the table.

Leaning far back in her chair, she began to write. The book, which served her as a desk, rested upon her knees. The quill pen slowly scratched the large, bold characters on the white surface. Henrika was not unskilled in writing, but to-day it must have been unusually hard for her, for her high forehead grew moist, her lips were drawn with pain, and after writing a few lines she would close her eyes or drink eagerly from the goblet of water that stood near her.

It was very quiet in the great room, but at times the silence was broken by strange sounds and noises that reached her from the dining-hall beneath her chamber. Clinking of glasses, shrill tittering, loud, deep laughter, a measure or two from a light love song, cheers, and then the sharp crash of a wine glass wantonly broken, came up to her in a confused

medley of sounds. She did not wish to hear it, but she heard it nevertheless and clinched her white teeth angrily. Still the pen did not come altogether to a pause.

She wrote in broken sentences or in phrases so involved and incoherent as to be incomprehensible. Here yawned omissions, there single words were repeated over and over again. The whole was like a letter written by a madwoman, and yet, in every line, in every stroke of the pen, the same wish was expressed with passionate longing: "Away from here! Away from this woman and from this house!"

It was addressed to her father. She implored him to free her from this place, to come for her or send for her. "Her uncle, Matenesse van Wibisma," she said, "seemed to be a tardy messenger; to be sure, while here he had taken pleasure in her aunt's evenings, which filled her, Henrika, with loathing. She would follow her sister out into the world if her father forced her to remain here." Then she entered upon a description of her aunt and her doings. The picture of the days and nights that she had endured for weeks with her aunt set forth in glaring colors a succession of greater and lesser sufferings, and of demands degrading to both mind and body.

Only too often did the drinking and tittering go on downstairs as on this evening; but not that alone —Henrika had always been obliged to associate with her aunt's guests, elderly *roués* of French or Italian origin and easy morals. As she described these gatherings the blood rose, still darker, to her flushed cheeks, the long strokes of the pen grew heavier and heavier. What the abbé told and what her aunt laughed at, what the Italian said and monseigneur reproved with a smirk and a slight

shake of the head, was so shameful that she would have felt herself contaminated by repeating it.

Was she a respectable girl or was she not? She would rather go hungry and thirsty than be present again at such carousings. When the dining-hall was empty other preposterous demands were made upon her, for her aunt, who could not bear to be left alone for a moment, was ill and suffering, and she was obliged to care for her. That she was glad and willing to nurse the sick, she wrote, she had shown sufficiently in her care of the village children when they were ill with the small-pox, but if her aunt could not sleep, she had to sit up with her, holding her hand and listening until morning to her laments, her whimperings, her prayers, her curses of herself and of the whole deceitful world. She, Henrika, had come to this house strong and well, but so much disgust, anger, and constant self-restraint had ruined her health.

The girl wrote until midnight. More and more indistinct grew the letters, more and more uneven the lines, and as she wrote the last words: "My head, my poor head! You will see that I am losing my mind. Oh, please, I implore you, my stern and beloved father, I implore you, take me home. I have heard something more about Anna—" her eyes grew dim, the pen dropped from her hand, and she fell back senseless in her chair.

Thus she remained, until the last laugh and the clink of glasses had died away in the room beneath, and her aunt's guests had left the house.

Denise, the *camarista*, noticed the light in the young fräulein's room. She entered, and after vainly trying to rouse Henrika, called her mistress.

The latter followed the maid, and as she ascended the stairs she muttered:

"Fallen asleep, *ennui*—nothing more. She would

have been merry with us downstairs, and would have laughed. Sluggish blood! 'People of butter' says King Philip. That mad Lamperi was so wicked to-night, and the abbé said things—things——"

The old woman's eyes were bright with wine and she waved her fan rapidly to and fro to cool her cheeks.

She stood before Henrika, she called to her, shook her, and sprinkled her with perfumed water from a large pearl, set in gold, that hung from her girdle and served as a smelling-bottle. As her niece only muttered unintelligible words in her reply, she bade the maid bring the medicine chest.

As Denise left the room the old woman caught sight of Henrika's letter, took it up, and with increasing anger read it word for word, flung it down at last, and tried to rouse her niece by shaking her; but in vain.

Meanwhile the steward, Belotti, had been informed of Henrika's severe illness, and as he was attached to the young fräulein he sent of his own accord for a doctor and summoned Father Damianus in the place of the banished spiritual adviser of the house. Then he repaired to the sick-room.

Even before he had crossed the threshold the old woman called to him in the greatest agitation:

"Belotti, what do you say now, Belotti? Sickness in the house, contagious sickness perhaps, perhaps even the plague."

"It seems to be nothing but a fever," answered the Italian soothingly; "come, Denise, we will carry the fräulein to the bed. The doctor will soon be here."

"The doctor!" shrieked the old lady and struck the marble top of the table with her fan, "who gave you permission, Belotti——"

"We are Christians," interrupted the servant, not without dignity.

"Very well, very well!" she cried. "Do as you please, call whom you please, but Henrika cannot remain here. Infection in the house, the plague, a black notice——"

"Excellenza alarms herself without cause. Let us hear what the doctor says first."

"I will not listen to him! I will not have the plague or the small-pox. Go down at once, Belotti, and get the litter ready. The old cavalier's room in the rear building is empty."

"But, excellenza, it is musty and so damp that the north wall is covered with mildew."

"Then have it cleaned and aired. What does this hesitation mean? It is for you to obey. Do you understand me, sir?"

"The cavalier's room is not fit for my gracious mistress' sick niece," answered Belotti respectfully but firmly.

"No? Are you quite sure?" asked the fräulein scornfully. "Go down, Denise, and have the litter brought up. Have you anything else to say, Belotti?"

"Yes, padrona," answered the Italian in a trembling voice. "I beg the excellenza to dismiss me."

"From my service?"

"With excellenza's permission, yes—from her service."

The old woman started and clutched the fan firmly in her hands.

"You are sensitive, Belotti."

"No, excellenza, but I am old and I shrink from the misfortune of being ill in this house."

The fräulein shrugged her shoulders and turning to the *camarista*, cried:

"The litter, Denise. You are dismissed, Belotti."

CHAPTER X.

The night that had brought sickness and suffering into the Hoogstraten mansion was followed by a beautiful morning. The storks were once more happy in Holland, and with loud and joyous clatter they flew out across the meadows upon which the sun shone brilliantly. It was a day such as the last of April sometimes bestows upon mortals, as though to show them that they pay too great homage to her much lauded successor, May, but altogether too little to her. In her house, April may pride herself, spring is born, and her radiant successor only contributes to the strength and unfolds the beauties of her nursling.

It was Sunday; and as the bells were ringing, it would seem to one who strolled along the sunny roads, through the flower-dotted meadows of Holland, where sleek cattle and fleecy sheep and idle horses were grazing, and met peasants in neat attire, and peasant women with shining gold ornaments under their snowy lace caps, burghers in gay apparel, and children released from school, as though nature herself wore a gala dress and made a braver show in brighter green, clearer blue, and richer wealth of flowers than on week days.

A joyous Sunday spirit likewise possessed the burghers who were taking an outing in the country on foot, in huge, crowded lumber wagons, or in gayly painted boats on the Rhine, to enjoy country bread, golden butter, and fresh cheese, milk, and

cool beer, with their wives and children, during the leisure hours of this day of rest.

Wilhelm had long since finished his organ playing in the church, but he had not gone with his companions into the country, for he preferred to use the hours of rest for more distant journeyings where shoe leather played no part.

They bore him on the wings of the wind over the plains of his native land, across the hills and dales of Germany, over the Alps, and away to Italy. A spot suited to such forgetfulness of the present, and of his daily surroundings in favor of bygone days and a far-away land, awaited him. His brothers, Ulrich and Johannes, who were also musicians, but who had recognized Wilhelm's greater gifts without envy and helped him to improve them, had fitted up for him during his absence in Italy, on the narrow side of the pointed roof of the house, a nicely furnished room out of which a wide door led upon a little balcony. Here stood a wooden bench where Wilhelm liked to sit and watch the flight of his pigeons and gaze dreamily into the distance, or when he was disposed to artistic creation, listened to the harmonies that filled his soul.

A beautiful view was to be had from this highest point of the house; indeed, one could see almost as far as from the top of the citadel, the old Roman tower in the center of the city. Like a spider in its web lay Wilhelm's native town amid the countless canals and streams that crossed the meadows. The red-brick city wall with its towers and bastions, and the dark thread of water at its base, encircled the pretty city almost as a fillet encircles a maiden's head, and like a crown of loosely woven thorns, bastions and intrenchments stretched in a wide broken circle about the walls. Between the defenses and the city wall browsed herds of cattle, and near and beyond the defenses rose villages and hamlets.

On this clear April day one could see, if one looked to the north, the Haarlem Lake; to the west, beyond the leafy dome of the forest of the Hague must lie the dunes which nature had piled up as a protection to the country against the importunate waves. The long chain of hills offered a sterner and more impregnable front to the assaults of the ocean than the earthworks and redoubts of Alfen, Leyderdorp, and Volkenburg, the three forts that lay close to the banks of the Rhine, presented to the hostile armies. The Rhine! Wilhelm gazed down at the narrow, sluggish stream and compared it to a dethroned monarch who had lost power and greatness and who graciously strives to bestow blessings in a limited circle with what remains of his possessions. The musician was familiar with the noble German Rhine and often followed it in spirit to the south, but oftener his dreams carried him with a mighty bound to the lake of Lugano, the pearl of the Western Alps, and when he thought of it and the Mediterranean he saw emerald green and azure blue and golden light; and at such times all his thoughts were transformed within his breast into music and exquisite harmonies.

And his journey from Lugano to Milan! Modest and overcrowded was the carriage that bore him to Leonardo's city, but in it he had found Isabella. And Rome, Rome, the noble, never-to-be-forgotten Rome, where we grow out of ourselves and gain in power and intellectual wealth as long as we remain there and which makes us wretched with longing when it lies behind us!

On the banks of the Tiber Wilhelm had first learned the meaning of art, his glorious art; here, at Isabella's side, a new world had opened out to him, but upon the flowers that had sprung up in his breast in Rome a heavy frost had fallen, and he

knew that they were ruined and could never bear fruit—but to-day he succeeded in recalling her to his mind in her youthful beauty and in thinking not of his lost love but of his kind friend, Isabella, and in dreaming of a sky as blue as solid turquoise and delicate cyanite, of slender columns and bubbling fountains, of olive groves and marble statues, of cool churches and gleaming villas, of passionate eyes and fiery wine, of superb choirs and of Isabella's singing.

The pigeons that were cooing and clucking in the cote beside him flew in and out at will, for now that their guardian was not watching them, they could do as they chose.

Allertssohn, the fencing-master, climbed the ladder to Wilhelm's watchtower, but Wilhelm did not notice him until he stood beside him on the balcony and greeted him in his deep voice.

"Where have we been, Herr Wilhelm?" asked the graybeard. "In this cloth-weaving Leyden? No! Probably with the goddess of music herself on Olympus—that is, if she has her lodging there."

"You have guessed aright," answered Wilhelm, pushing the hair from his forehead with both hands. "I have been to visit her and she sends you her compliments."

"Then give her mine in return," answered the other, "though she and I are only distant acquaintances. My throat is better suited to drinking than singing. Will you allow me?"

The fencing-master took up the jug of beer, which Wilhelm's mother filled freshly every day and placed in her darling's room, and took a deep draught. Then he wiped his mustache and said:

"That did me good, and I needed it. The men wanted to get out and enjoy themselves instead of drilling, but we forced them to go through with it,

Jonker* van Warmond, Duivenvoorde and I. Who knows how soon we shall be called upon to show what we can do? By Roland, my fore man, such folly is like a cudgel, against which Florentine rapiers and skillful tierce and carte avail nothing. My wheat is ruined by the hail." †

"Then let it lie, and see whether the barley and clover will not do better," answered Wilhelm gayly, tossing some grain to a large pigeon that had alighted on the parapet of his watchtower.

"The creature eats, but what is it good for?" cried Allertssohn as he watched the bird. "Herr van Warmond, a young man after my own heart, has just brought me two falcons. Do you want to see how I tame them?"

"No, captain, I have enough in my pigeons and my music."

"As you choose. That long-necked one there is a comical knave."

"What country does he hail from, do you think? There he goes flying to the others. Watch him awhile and tell me."

"Ask King Solomon; he was on familiar terms with birds."

"Watch him and you will soon find out."

"The fellow has a stiff neck and carries his head unusually high."

"And his beak?"

"Curved like a hawk's, almost! *Potz Tausend!* how the fellow struts about with his toes turned out! Stop, bandit! He'll peck that little pigeon to death. Upon my soul, the insolent rascal must come from Spain."

"Quite right, it is a Spanish pigeon. He has

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* Jonker, a nobleman.

† *Mir ist der Weizen verhagelt:* I am disgusted with things.

come to the cote, but I do not want him; for I keep only a few pairs of the same breed and I am trying to have the best. It is useless to try and raise different breeds in one cote."

"That is something to think about. But I don't think that you have chosen the handsomest breed."

"No. What you see are a cross between carrier and tumbler, the Antwerp breed of carrier-pigeons. Blue, red, or spotted, the color matters not, but they must have small bodies and large wings with broad quills on their pinion-feathers, and above all, good muscles. That one there—wait, I will catch him—is one of my best flyers. Try and lift his wing."

"The little thing is strong indeed. How he holds down his wing! Falcons are not much stronger."

"He's a carrier too and can find his way alone."

"Why don't you keep some white tumblers? I should think that one could follow them in their flight longer than any others."

"Because it is the same with pigeons as with men. Any one that makes a show and can be seen from a distance is pursued by enemies and envious people, and birds of prey always pounce first upon white pigeons. I tell you, meister, that if one keeps one's eyes open, one can learn in a dove-cote the whole history of the descendants of Adam and Eve."

"You mean that fighting and love-making goes on here just as it does in Leyden."

"Exactly, captain. If I mate a young pigeon and an old one, it never turns out well. When the male is in love he knows how to pay as pretty compliments to his fair one as the finest gallant to his dulcinea. And do you know what the billing and cooing mean? The suitor feeds his darling; that

is, he strives to win her by fine presents. Then comes the wedding, and they build a nest. If there are young ones, they feed them together in perfect harmony. The best breeds are bad setters and we place their eggs under birds of a commoner breed."

"They are the noble ladies who have nurses for their children."

"Unmated pigeons often make mischief among the mated pigeons."

"Take warning, young man, and beware of being a bachelor. I don't say anything against girls who remain unmarried; I have found many sweet and helpful women among them."

"So have I, but bad ones too, unfortunately, as here in the cote. On the whole, my charges are happy in their marriages, but if it comes to a separation——"

"Which of the two is at fault?"

"In nine cases out of ten, the female."

"By Roland, my fore man, just as it is among people," cried the fencing-master, clapping his hands.

"What is this about your Roland, Herr Allerts? You promised me a short time ago—but who is that coming up the ladder?"

"I hear your mother."

"She is bringing a visitor. I know that voice—and yet— Wait. It is Fräulein van Hoogstraten's steward."

"From Nobelstrasse? Let me go, Wilhelm. This Glipper crew——"

"Wait a moment, there is room for only one on the ladder," said the musician and held out his hand to Belotti to help him from the last round into the room.

"Spaniards and friends of Spaniards," muttered

the fencing-master, going to the door, and calling as he began to descend the ladder: "I will wait down here until the air is pure again."

The steward's handsome face, usually smooth shaven, was covered with a stubble of beard, and the old man looked troubled and worn, as he began to tell Wilhelm what had taken place since the previous evening in his mistress' house.

"A man who has a quick temper," said the Italian, as he went on with his story, "may grow weaker with years, but not calmer. I could not look on and see the poor angel, for she's not far from the Virgin's throne, treated like a sick dog that is thrown out into the courtyard, and so I took my leave."

"It does you honor; but the time was ill chosen. And did they really take the fräulein to the damp room?"

"No, sir. Father Damianus came and made the old excellenza understand what the Holy Virgin expects from Christian people, and when the padrona still attempted to have her way, the holy man spoke to her so sharply and sternly that she submitted. The signorina is lying in her bed with burning cheeks and talking wildly."

"And who is treating the patient?"

"It was about a doctor that I have come to you, my dear sir; for Doctor de Bont, who lost no time in coming when I sent for him, was treated so badly by the excellenza that he turned his back upon her and declared to me, on leaving, that he would not come again."

Wilhelm shook his head, but the Italian went on:

"There are other doctors in Leyden, to be sure, but Father Damianus says that Doctor de Bont or Bontius, as they call him, is the cleverest and most conscientious of them all, and as the old excellenza

herself had a shock this noon, and cannot leave her bed for a long while, the way is clear, and Father Damianus says that he, himself, will go for Doctor Bontius if necessary. But as you are a native of the town, and are not a stranger to the signorina, I wanted to spare the Father the refusal which surely awaits him from the enemy of our holy Church. Besides the poor man has enough to bear from the scoffers and good-for-nothing boys when he goes through the streets with the sacrament."

"You know that it is strictly forbidden to disturb him in the performance of his duties."

"Yet he cannot show himself in the streets without being taunted. You and I cannot change the world, sir. As long as the Church had the upper hand, she burned and quartered you, and now that you are in power here, our priests are persecuted and derided."

"In opposition to the law and the decree of the magistrates."

"You will not restrain the people, and Father Damianus is a lamb who bears all things patiently, and is as good a Christian as many a saint before whom we burn candles. Do you know the doctor?"

"Slightly, by sight."

"Oh, then, go to him, sir, for the fräulein's sake," cried the old man beseechingly. "It is in your power to save a human life—a beautiful, young, human life."

The steward's eyes were moist. As Wilhelm laid his hand on the other's arm, and said kindly: "I will try," the fencing-master shouted at the door: "Your conference is too long for me. Good-by until another time."

"No, come in for a moment. This gentleman has come here on account of a poor girl who is dangerously ill. The helpless child is now lying

alone without attendance, for her aunt, the old Fräulein van Hoogstraten has driven Doctor de Bont from the bedside because he is a Calvinist."

"From the sick girl's bedside?"

"It is contemptible enough; but now the old lady is down herself."

"Bravo, bravo!" cried the fencing-master, clapping his hands. "If the devil himself isn't afraid of her and wants to carry her off, I'll pay for the post-horses. But the girl—the sick girl?"

"This gentleman here begs me to induce De Bont to go to her again. You are a friend of the doctor?"

"I was, Wilhelm, I was; but—last Friday we almost came to blows about the new helmets; and now the learned demi-god demands an apology from me; but it isn't like me to sound the retreat——"

"Oh, good sir!" cried Belotti with touching earnestness; "the poor child is lying in a high fever and without help. If Heaven has blessed you with children——"

"Gently, old man, gently," answered the fencing-master. "My children are no concern of yours, but we will do what we can do for the young lady. *Auf wiedersehen*, gentlemen. Roland, my fore man, what sha'n't we live to see! Hemp is cheap in Holland, and yet such a monster has lived among us to be as old as a raven."

With these words he climbed down the ladder. In the street he pondered with a wry face over the apology he was to make to Doctor Bontius, but all the while his eyes and bearded lips were smiling.

His learned friend made the apology easy for him, and when Belotti returned to the house he found the doctor at the sick girl's bedside.

CHAPTER XI.

Frau Elizabeth von Nordwyk and the wife of the clerk of the council, Van Hout, had both asked the burgomaster's wife to go with them into the country to enjoy the beautiful spring day, but, in spite of Barbara's persuasions the young wife could not be induced to accept their invitation.

Since her husband's departure a week had run its course as slowly as the brackish water in one of the canals that intersected the meadows of Holland crept toward the broad river.

Sleep loves the couch of youth and it had come to hers again, but with the rising of the sun returned the discontent, uneasiness, and inward distress that sleep had mercifully interrupted.

She know that it was not right and that her father would have reproached her had he seen her so.

There are women who are ashamed of red cheeks and unaffected enjoyment of life, and who find a miserable pleasure in suffering. Maria was certainly not one of these. She would have been glad to be happy and she left no means untried to win back her lost peace of mind. Honestly anxious to fulfill her duty she returned to little Lieschen's bedside, but the child recovered rapidly and called for Barbara, or Adrian, or Trautchen as soon as she found herself alone with her.

She tried to read, but the few books that she had brought with her from Delft were all familiar to

her, and before she could become absorbed in them her thoughts followed their own course.

Wilhelm brought her the new motet, and she attempted to sing it through; but music requires complete devotion from those who wish to enjoy its gifts, and therefore the playing on the flute and the singing refused to bring either comfort or pleasure to her whose mind was occupied with other things.

When she helped Adrian with his studies her patience was exhausted much sooner than usual. On the first market-day she went out with Trautchen to make purchases according to her husband's instructions, and as she went from the various stands where different commodities were offered for sale—here fish, there meat or vegetables—and mingled with the motley throng and heard called from every side: "Frau Bürgemeisterin, here!" and "Frau Bürgemeisterin, I have what you want!" she forgot what was depressing her.

With newly-awakened self-confidence she sampled flour, pulse and dried fish, and made it a point to bargain carefully. Barbara should see that she understood how to buy. The crowds were dense at every stall, for the city magistrates had issued a proclamation bidding every household, in view of the danger that threatened, to lay in ample stores on all the market days, but even the busy purchasers made room for the burgomaster's pretty young wife, and this too did her heart good.

With a bright face and happy in having done her best, she returned home and went at once to the kitchen to find Barbara.

Peter's sister had noticed Maria's depression, and was glad to see her sally forth to make her purchases. The choosing and bargaining could not but distract her and bring her thoughts into another channel. To be sure, the careful housekeeper, who

credited Maria with possessing all good qualities but those of a clever housewife, had bidden Trautchen to see that her mistress was not imposed upon. But when the demand is two or three times as great as the supply prices rise. And so it came about that when Maria told what she had paid for this and that Barbara exclaimed in quick succession: "But, child, that is unheard of!" or "It is enough to drive us to beggary!"

These exclamations, which under the prevailing circumstances were for the greater part unjust, angered Maria, but she was anxious to be at peace with her sister-in-law, and although it was hard for her to be blamed unjustly it was not her nature to express her vexation in violent words. So she said, with only slight excitement:

"Ask what other ladies paid and then scold me if you think it just."

With that she left the kitchen.

"My child, I am not scolding," cried Barbara after her, but Maria would not hear, went quickly upstairs and shut herself into her room. Her happiness had vanished again.

On Sunday she went to church. After dinner she filled a bag with provisions for Adrian, who was going on a boating excursion with some friends, and then seated herself in her room by the window. Portly gentlemen, among them several members of the council, went by with their wives and children in holiday garb; young girls with flowers at their bosoms walked arm-in-arm by twos and threes along the footpath beside the canal to dance in the village outside the Zylthor. They walked in silence and with decorously downcast eyes, but more than one cheek flushed and more than one suppressed laugh came from fresh lips when the burgher lads, who were following the demure maidens as closely as

sea-gulls a ship, indulged in raillery or whispered words that no third person was supposed to hear.

Cheerful and free from care seemed the crowds that streamed toward the Zylthor, and one could see in every face the anticipation of pleasant hours in the fresh air and the sunny meadows. What was drawing them out of doors seemed beautiful and desirable even to the burgomaster's wife; but what had she, with her heavy heart, alone among strangers, to do with happy people? The shadows of the houses seemed unusually dark to her, the city air heavier than ever before, and it seemed as though spring had come to every one, great and small, young and old, but not to her.

The trees and houses along the Achtergracht were already casting longer shadows and the golden vapor that floated above the roofs began to mingle with a tender pink, when Maria heard a horse approaching at a trot. She sat erect and rigid, and her heart beat violently. She wished to receive Peter differently from usual. She would be frank with him and show him what was in her mind and that things could not continue as they were; she already sought for fitting words for what she had to say to him. The horse stopped before the door. She stepped to the window and saw her husband swing himself from the saddle and look gladly up at her room. She did not wave to him, but her heart drew her to him. All her reflections, all her misgivings were forgotten, and with flying feet she ran along the passage to the stairs. In the meanwhile he had entered the hall and she called his name. "Child, Maria, is that you!" came his answer, and, active as a boy, he sprang up the stairs, met her on the topmost step, and drew her with overwhelming tenderness to his heart.

"At last, at last I have you again!" he cried joy-

fully, and pressed his lips to her eyes and her fragrant hair. She wound her arms tight about his neck, but he freed himself and holding her hands in his, asked: "Are Barbara and Adrian at home?"

She shook her head.

Then he laughed, bent down, lifted her as he would a child, and bore her to his room. Maria, notwithstanding her long-cherished resolve to receive him coldly, was carried away by his warmth of feeling. She rejoiced in having him once more and believed him willingly when he told her with tender words how painful the separation had been to him, how sorely he had missed her, and how, in spite of his usual inability to recall the faces of those who were absent, her image had ever been distinctly before his eyes.

How fervently and with what convincing words he knew how to give expression to his love to-day! She was a happy wife after all, and she showed him unreservedly that she was.

Barbara and Adrian returned and there was much to be told at the evening meal. Peter had had many strange adventures on his journey and had gained fresh hope, the boy had distinguished himself at school, and Lieschen's illness could now be reckoned among the dangers that were past. Barbara beamed with joy, for between Maria and her brother all seemed well once more.

The fair summer evening passed happily.

Maria's heart was light the following morning as she braided a black velvet ribbon into her hair, for she had found courage to tell Peter that she longed for a greater share in his troubles, and had received a kindly acquiescence. A nobler, richer life, she hoped, would begin for her from now on. This very day he was to tell her what he had accomplished with the prince and at Dortrecht, for until now no word on the subject had passed his lips.

Barbara, who was bustling about the kitchen and was just on the point of taking three chickens from a coop to kill them, gave them a short respite and even threw them a handful of barley, as she heard her sister-in-law come singing down the stairs. The snatches of Wilhelm's latest madrigal sounded to her as sweet and full of promise as the first note of the nightingale.

It was spring again in the house, and her kind, round face looked from her great cap, as bright and unclouded as a sunflower from its green sepals.

"This is one of your good days, child; we will melt down the butter and salt the hams."

Her voice was as joyous as though she were giving her an invitation into paradise, and Maria helped her willingly about the work, which was begun without delay. When the widow's hands were busy her tongue could not remain idle, and her curiosity was roused not a little by what might have passed between Peter and his young wife.

She brought the conversation round cleverly enough to her brother, and put with apparent carelessness the question:

"Has he made any excuse for his departure on the anniversary of your wedding-day?"

"I know why he went; he was obliged to go."

"Of course, of course; but goats will eat whatever is green. One must not overlook too much in men. Give, but also take."

"I do not wish to bargain with Peter, and even if certain things did weigh upon me, I have been glad to forget them after such a long separation."

"Wet hay may destroy the barn, and any one to whom a hare runs may catch him. One should not keep one's troubles to one's self, but out with them; that is what one's tongue is for, and yesterday was the time to make a clean breast of all that was distressing you."

"He was in such good spirits when he came; and besides, why do you think that I am unhappy?"

"Unhappy? Who said that you were unhappy?"

Maria reddened, but the widow seized the knife and opened the chicken coop.

Trautchen was helping the two ladies, but she was often interrupted in her work, for the knocker on the front door was given no peace that morning, and the visitors must have brought little news that was pleasant to the burgomaster, for his deep, angry voice could be heard at times even in the kitchen.

He was longest in conference with Van Hout, who had come not only in search of information and to bring him news, but also as complainant.

It was no common sight when these two men, who far surpassed their townsmen not only in stature but in high purpose and enthusiastic devotion to the cause of freedom, gave in turn utterance to their opinions and common expression to their indignation. Van Hout, excitable, restless, and imaginative, was the first speaker, Van der Werff, slow and calm, the second.

Among the city fathers, the rich nobles, the great weavers and brewers, reigned a bad feeling, for property, life, and position were of more importance to them than religion and freedom, while the poor man, who painfully maintained his family by the sweat of his brow, was resolved and glad to sacrifice all for the good cause.

Difficulties upon difficulties were to be overcome. Scaffoldings and sheds, frames and all other woodwork that might serve as a place of concealment, were to be torn down, as all the country-houses and other buildings near the town had formerly been. Much newly erected woodwork had already been

removed, but the rich men held out the longest against having the ax put to theirs. Fresh earthworks were being thrown up around the important fort of Valkenburg; but part of the land where the laborers were obliged to dig belonged to a brewer, and he demanded a large sum in compensation for his injured meadow. During the siege that had been raised in March, had been issued paper money, round pieces of pasteboard bearing on one side the lion of the Netherlands with the inscription, "*Haec libertatis ergo*" and on the other the arms of the city and the motto, "God protect Leyden." These were to be exchanged for coin or provisions, but rich speculators had bought up a large number of these pieces and were endeavoring to put up their value. Demands of every description poured in upon the burgomaster and, added to all this, he had to think of his own affairs, for soon all communication with the outside world might be cut off, and it was necessary for him to settle many things with his business representative in Hamburg. Great losses were threatened, but he left nothing undone in order to save for his family what was still to be saved.

Wife and children he saw but seldom: still he thought that he was fulfilling the promise Maria had exacted from him on the evening of his return, when he answered her questions briefly or made of his own accord such remarks as: "We had a hot time of it at the Rathhaus to-day," or, "The exchange of the paper money is giving more trouble than we expected."

He felt no need of a confidante, and his first wife had been perfectly contented and happy when in his leisure moments he had sat quietly beside her, called her his darling, taken pleasure in the children, or only praised her waffles and Sunday roasts.

Business and public affairs had been his province, the kitchen and the nursery hers. What they had shared, was the consciousness of the love that each felt for the other, the children, the distinction, the honors, the possessions of the household.

Maria demanded more, and he was willing to grant it to her, but when in the evening she plied the exhausted man with questions that he was accustomed to hear only from the lips of men, he put her off with some answer about happier days, or even fell asleep in the midst of her inquiries.

She saw how much was weighing upon him, how untiringly he labored—but why did he not shift a part of the burden upon other shoulders?

Once, when the weather was fine, he went with her into the country. She seized the opportunity to impress upon him that he owed it to himself and to her to take more rest.

He listened patiently, and when she had ended her entreaties and warnings, he took her hand in his and said:

"You have met Herr Marnix St. Aldegronde and know what the cause owes to him. Do you know his motto?"

She nodded and answered in a low voice: "*Repos ailleurs.*"

"Where else can we rest?" he returned steadfastly.

A slight shudder seized her, and as she drew her hand away she could not but think: "Where else? —not here it seems. Rest and happiness have no abiding place here." She did not speak these words aloud, but she could not drive them from her mind.

CHAPTER XII.

In all the quiet Nobelstrasse, the Hoogstraten mansion was the quietest on these May mornings. The street in front of the house was covered with a mixture of straw and sand in accordance with the orders of Doctor Bontius and the sick lady's attorney. The windows were heavily curtained, and a strip of felt hung between the knocker and the door. The door was ajar and behind it sat a servant ready to warn those who sought admission.

On a morning early in May, the musician Wilhelm Corneliussohn and Janus Dousa turned into the Nobelstrasse. Both men had been carrying on a lively conversation, but as they approached the straw and sand, their voices were lowered, and finally silenced altogether.

"The carpet that is spread under the feet of the conqueror Death," said the young noble. "Let us hope that he will lower his torch but once here and show honor to age, however unworthy of honor it may be. Do not stay too long in the infected house, Herr Wilhelm."

The musician softly opened the door. The servant greeted him in silence and went toward the stairs to call Belotti; for the musician had already asked more than once for the steward.

Wilhelm entered the cabinet where he was accustomed to wait, and for the first time found there another caller in a somewhat unusual attitude. Erect, but with his head fallen to one side, sat

Father Damianus in an armchair, asleep. The face of the priest, a man at the end of the thirties, was framed by a thin, light beard, and was pink and white as a child's. Around the large tonsure was a small fringe of thin, light hair; in the hands that were sunk in the sleeper's lap was a rosary of olive wood. The smile that played about his half-open lips was kind and gentle.

"This mild saint in woman's garb," thought Wilhelm, "does not look as though he could take hold with energy, and yet his hands are hard and worn with work."

When Belotti entered the cabinet and caught sight of the sleeping priest, he carefully placed a pillow under his head and motioned to Wilhelm to follow him into the hall.

"Let him get a little rest," said the Italian. "From yesterday noon until two hours ago, he has been sitting at the padrona's bedside. Usually she knows nothing of what is going on around her, but as soon as consciousness returns she craves religious consolation. She still rejects the sacrament for the dying, for she will not admit to herself that she may be on the point of death. At times, to be sure, when the pain is worse, she asks in mortal terror whether all is ready, for she dreads to die without extreme unction."

"And how is Fräulein Henrika?"

"A very little better.

The priest stepped out from the cabinet. Belotti kissed his hand reverently and Wilhelm made a respectful inclination.

"I had fallen asleep," said Father Damianus simply and naturally, but not in as powerful and deep a voice as one would have expected from his broad chest and tall figure. "I must read mass now, visit my sick, and then I shall return. Have you thought better of your resolve, Belotti?"

"I cannot, Father, the Virgin knows I cannot. I was given my dismissal on the first of May; it is now the eighth and I am still here—I haven't left the house because I am a Christian! Now the ladies are attended by a good doctor, Sister Gonzaga is at her post, you yourself are earning a place among the martyrs in paradise by your devotion, and so I can pack up my things without committing a crime."

"Do not go, Belotti," said the priest earnestly. "And if you still hold to your purpose at least do not call yourself a Christian."

"You will stay," cried Wilhelm, "if only for the sake of the young fräulein, toward whom you still feel kindly."

Belotti shook his head and answered quietly:

"You can add nothing, young sir, to what his reverence said to me last night. My resolve is taken, I am going; but as I am anxious for the holy father's good opinion and for yours, I beg you to honor me by listening to me. I have passed my sixty-second year, and an old horse and an old servant stand long in the market place before any one buys them. In Brussels there may still be found a place for a Catholic steward who understands his business, but this old heart longs for Naples again—so passionately, so passionately! You have seen our blue bay and our skies, young sir, and I long for them indeed, but still more for smaller things. It is a pleasure to me to be able to speak my language to you, Meister Wilhelm, and you, my Father. But there is a land where every one speaks as I do. At the foot of Vesuvius lies a little town—many a one would be afraid to stay there one half hour, when the mountain rumbles, when ashes come raining down, and burning lava flows in streams. The houses are by no means as well built and the windows do not shine as they do in this country. In-

deed, I fear there are but few window panes in Resina, but the children suffer no more from the cold than they do here. What would a Leyden housewife say to our village streets? Poles with grapevines, branches of fig trees, and bright-colored wash on the roofs, at the windows, and on the crooked, sloping balconies. Everything grows together, higgledy-piggledy. And the lads in their rags, which no tailor has mended and patched, climb among the white walls of the vineyards, and the little girls, whose mothers comb their hair for them on the doorsteps, are not as pink and white and as carefully scrubbed as Dutch children, but I should like to see the brown-skinned, black-haired youngsters with their dark eyes once more, and end my days amid all the hubbub in the warm air and without care or work, with my nephews and nieces and blood-relations around me."

The old man's face had flushed as he spoke, and in his black eyes shone a fire that only a short time before had seemed extinguished by the air of the north and his long servitude. As neither the priest nor Wilhelm made an immediate reply to his speech, he went on more composedly:

Monseigneur Gloria is going to Italy and I am to accompany him as courier to Rome; from there I can easily reach Naples, and on the interest of my savings I can live there free from care. My future master starts on the fifteenth, and on the twelfth I must be in Antwerp, where I am to meet him."

The eyes of the priest and the musician met. Wilhelm had not the heart to dissuade the steward from his purpose, but Father Damianus collected himself, laid his hand on the old man's shoulder, and said:

"If you wait here a few weeks longer, Belotti, you will find true peace; I mean the peace of a good

conscience. To those who are faithful unto death is promised the crown of life. When these grievous times are over, it will be easy to help you on your way to your native land. We shall meet again at noon, Belotti. Should my assistance be necessary, send for me; old Ambrosius will know where to find me. God's blessing be with you, and with you, too, Herr Wilhelm, if you will take it from me."

When the priest had left the house, the steward said with a sigh:

"He will force me yet to do his will. He misuses his power over souls. I am not a saint, and what he asks of me——"

"Is what is right," said Wilhelm decidedly.

"But you do not know what it means to throw away, like cast-off shoes, the dearest hope of a long, troubled life. And for whom, I ask you, for whom? Do you know my padrona? Oh, sir, I have learned things in this house, things which you in your youth would not believe even possible. The fräulein has made an impression upon you! Am I right or not?"

"You are mistaken, Belotti."

"Is it true? I am glad for your sake, for you are a simple musician, and the signorina bears the name of Hoogstraten, and with that all is said. Do you know the fräulein's father?"

"No, Belotti."

"What a race! what a race! Did you ever hear the story of our signorina's eldest sister?"

"Henrika has an elder sister?"

"Yes, sir; and when I think of her—I imagine the signorina, the signorina herself, only taller, more stately, more beautiful."

"Isabella!" cried the musician; a suspicion that had arisen in his mind since his talk with Henrika seemed to be confirmed; he grasped the steward's

arm so suddenly and unexpectedly that the old man drew back.

"What do you know of her?" he went on excitedly. "I beg of you, Belotti, tell me all."

The servant glanced toward the stairs and answered with a shake of his head:

"You must be mistaken; there never was an Isabella in this family to my knowledge; but I shall be glad to place myself at your service. Return at dusk, but you must not expect a cheerful story."

Twilight had scarcely given way to darkness when the musician returned to the Hoogstraten mansion.

The cabinet was empty, but he had not long to wait for Belotti.

The old man placed a tray with a flask of wine and a glass on the table near the lamp, and after informing Wilhelm of the invalid's condition, led him with marked politeness to a seat. When the musician asked him why he had not brought a glass for himself, he answered:

"I drink only water, but allow me to take the liberty of sitting down. The servant who attends to the chambers has left the house, and I have been running up and down stairs all day. It has tired my old legs, and there is little prospect of a quiet night."

A single taper lighted the room. Belotti, who was leaning far back in his chair, unfolded his clasped hands and began slowly:

"I was speaking this morning of the Hoogstraten blood. Children of the same parents are often unlike, but in your little country which has its own language and also possesses much that is characteristic—you will not deny it—each ancient family has its peculiar traits. I know it, for I have been in many noble houses in Holland. Each race

has its peculiar ways. Even where—with your permission—there is insanity in the family, it seldom appears in one member alone. My mistress has more of her French mother's nature. But I was to speak of the signorina and I am getting too far from my subject."

"No, Belotti, by no means; there is time enough, and I like to listen to you, but you must first answer one question."

"Eh, sir, how your cheeks burn! Did you happen to meet the signorina in Italy?"

"Perhaps, Belotti."

"Oh, then, yes, to be sure! Any one who has once seen her does not forget her easily. What is it that you wish to know?"

"The lady's name, first of all."

"Anna."

"And not Isabella also?"

"No, sir, she was never called anything but Anna."

"And when did she leave Holland?"

"Wait; it was—it was four years ago last Easter."

"Is she dark or fair?"

"I have just said that she looked exactly like Fräulein Henrika. But what lady might not be dark or fair? I think we shall get to the point sooner if you will allow me to ask you a question. Did the lady you refer to have a large, semicircular scar just below the hair, in the very middle of her forehead?"

"Enough!" cried Wilhelm, rising hastily. "When a child she fell on one of her father's weapons."

"The other way sir, the handle of Jonker van Hoogstraten's pistol fell upon his daughter's forehead. How horror-stricken you look! *Mein Gott!* I have seen more than that in this house. But it is

my turn now: In what city in my native land did you meet the signorina?"

"In Rome, alone and under an assumed name. Isabella—a girl of Dutch descent. Go on with your story, Belotti, I entreat you. I will not interrupt you again. What had the child done that her own father——"

"Of all the mad Hoogstratens, the jonker is the maddest. In Italy you have perhaps seen men like him, but you might search in vain for such a whirlwind in this country. You must not think him an evilly disposed man on this account, but a word or a look that does not please him drives him to madness and he does things that he regrets as soon as they are done. As for the signorina's scar, she came by it in this wise. She was still a child and had no business to meddle with firearms, but she did so, nevertheless, as often as she could, and one day the pistol went off and the ball struck one of the best hunting-dogs. The jonker heard the report and when he saw the animal lying on the ground and the pistol at the little fräulein's feet, he picked up the weapon and struck her with the sharp-edged handle."

"A child, his own daughter!" cried Wilhelm angrily.

"There are different kinds of men," continued Belotti. "Some, and you are one of these, consider carefully before they speak or act; others consider long, and, when they are done considering, one hears a great many words, but it seldom comes to action; others still, and at the head of them is the Hoogstraten race, pile deed upon deed, and if they consider at all, it is only after the deed is done. If they find that they have done wrong, their pride prevents their admitting it, repairing it, or recalling it. So one calamity follows upon another, but it does not

trouble them and it is soon forgotten, what with wine and play, the joust and the hunt. Debts there are a plenty, but worrying is left to the creditors, and for the sons to whom no inheritance falls, there can be found a place at court or in the army; for the daughters, if they belong to our faith, there is no lack of convents, thank God, and for both there is hope of rich aunts and other relations dying without issue."

"You speak forcibly."

"But truly, none the less, and every word applies to the jonker; he, indeed, had no need to make any provision for sons, for his wife did not present him with any. He met his wife at the court in Brussels, and she came from Parma."

"Did you know her?"

"She died before I entered the padrona's service. The two young ladies grew up without any mother. You have heard that the jonker could lay violent hands even on them, but he seemed to love them nevertheless, and could never make up his mind to place them in a convent. At times, however, he felt—as he readily admitted in conversations with the excellenza—that there might be a more fitting place for a young noblewoman to grow up in than his castle, where things were in a bad way, and so at last he sent his eldest daughter to us. My mistress had never been able to endure young girls, but Fräulein Anna was one of her nearest relatives, and I know that she invited her of her own accord. I can still see before me the young signorina of sixteen. I have never laid eyes on a sweeter creature, Herr Wilhelm, before or since, and yet she was never the same. I have seen her as soft as Flemish velvet, but at other times she could rage and storm like the November gales in your country. She was always as fair as a rose, and since her mother *camarista*, who

had brought her up, was from Lugano, and the priest who taught her was from Pisa and was recognized as a fine musician, she spoke my native tongue like a child of Tuscany and was thoroughly familiar with music. You have doubtless heard her sing and play on the harp and lute, but you must have know that all the ladies of the Hoogstraten family, with the exception of my mistress, have a special talent for your art. In the summer we used to live in the fine country house that was torn down—with little right, in my opinion—by your friends, before the siege. Much noble company used to ride out to us. We kept open house, and wherever a good table and a young lady as beautiful as our signorina are to be found cavaliers are not lacking. Among them was a very distinguished gentleman of middle age, the Marquis d'Avennes, to whom the excellenza had given a special invitation. We never received any prince with greater attention than we did him. Naturally, for his mother was a relative of the excellenza. You must know that my mistress is of Norman origin on her mother's side. The Marquis d'Avennes was certainly a fine cavalier, but much more elegant than manly. He was soon madly in love with Fräulein Anna and sued for her hand in due form. The excellenza favored the marriage and the jonker said simply: 'You must take him.' He would listen to no opposition. Nor do most nobles wait long for their daughters' consent when a fitting suitor appears. So the signorina became the marquis' betrothed, but the padrona said decidedly that her niece was still too young to be married. At that time she had the jonker completely under her control and made him agree to postpone the wedding until Easter. The outfit was to be prepared during the winter. The condition that he must wait six months was imposed on the marquis and he went

back to France with the ring on his finger. His betrothed shed no tears for him and, as soon as he was gone, she tossed the betrothal ring into her jewel case, in the presence of the camarista, from whom I heard it. She dared not oppose her father, but she did not withhold from the excellenza her opinion of the marquis, and her aunt, although she favored the Frenchman's suit, indulged her in it. On the other hand, hot words often passed between the two, and if the padrona had reason for clipping the wings of the wild falcon and for teaching the young girl what was becoming to ladies of noble birth, the signorina was also justified in complaining of many demands with which the excellenza spoiled her pleasure in life. I am sorry, meister, to disturb your youthful confidence, but if a man keeps his eyes open as he grows gray, he meets many people who take pleasure in injuring other people, nay, find it a necessity. At the same time it is a comfort to me that no one is wicked for the sake of being wicked; indeed, I have often found that the worst impulses—how shall I express it?—that the worst impulses often come from the perversion or perhaps only from an excessive exercise of the noblest virtues, whose reverse or caricature they are. From laudable ambition comes degrading envy, from honorable emulation contemptible avarice, from tender passion fierce hatred. My mistress, when she was young, knew how to love deeply and truly, but she was shamefully deceived and now she is possessed by hatred not only against one person, but against the whole world, and out of her noble fidelity has grown her obstinate clinging to evil desires. What I mean by this and how it has come about, you shall hear, if you will listen to me further.

"As winter approached, I was ordered to precede the family to Brussels and there to start a new

establishment on a splendid scale. The ladies followed shortly. It was four years ago. Duke Alva was still ruling as viceroy in Brussels; and this great gentleman thought most highly of my mistress and even did us the honor to visit us twice. His most distinguished officers came and went at our house. Among them was Don Luis d'Avila, a nobleman of ancient family and one of the duke's favorites. Like the marquis, he was no longer in his first youth, but he was of very different caliber; a man whose tall figure seemed cast in steel, a swordsman of invincible strength and skill, and the most dreaded of all duelists, whose passionate eyes and wonderful voice must have had a mysterious fascination for women. In the servants' hall, stories by the dozen were told of his adventures and half of them approached the truth; this I learned by experience later on. If you think that this breaker of hearts looked like the gay, curly-haired favorites of fortune to whom young ladies run with their hearts in their hands, you are mistaken; Don Luis was a grave man with a pale complexion and closely cropped hair; he never wore anything but dark clothes, and even carried a sword the hilt of which was of some dark metal instead of gold and silver. He looked far more like Death than Love. Perhaps it was this very thing that made him irresistible, for we are all born for death and no wooer is so sure of victory as he.

"The padrona was not favorably inclined to him at first, but this soon changed, and by New Year's he was invited even to her small evening receptions. He came as often as he was asked, but for our young fräulein he had not a word, a look, scarcely a greeting. Only when the signorina began to sing did he approach her to criticise sharply what had displeased him in her execution. At times he

sang himself and he usually selected the same songs as though to outdo her by his superior skill.

"So things went on until Carnival. On Shrove Tuesday the padrona gave a grand banquet and as I directed the servants in attendance and was standing behind the signorina and Don Luis, whom the padrona had for some time been in the habit of placing beside her niece, I noticed that their hands had met under the table and remained clasped a long time. My heart was so heavy that it was hard for me to pay the attention necessary on such an occasion—and when I was summond the following morning to the padrona to render my accounts, I considered it my duty to remark discreetly to her that Don Luis d'Avila's suit did not seem to displease the young fräulein in spite of her betrothal. She let me speak, but when I ventured to repeat what was said about the Spaniard, she started up angrily and pointed to the door. A faithful servant hears and sees much more than the masters and mistresses suspect, and I enjoyed the confidence of the padrona's foster-sister, who is now no more; but at that time Susanna knew all that concerned her mistress.

"The prospects of the future bridegroom in France were bad, for when the padrona spoke of him it was with a laugh that we knew, and that boded no good; but she wrote very often notwithstanding, to the marquis and his mother, and many letters came to us from Rochebrun. To be sure, the excellenza also granted more than one secret audience to Don Luis.

"During Lent came a messenger from the jonker with the news that on Easter day he and the marquis would be in Brussels, and on Holy Thursday I received orders to have the private chapel adorned with flowers, to secure post horses, and to do other

things. On Good Friday, the day of our Lord's crucifixion—I would that I were telling lies—on Good Friday the signorina was decked betimes in her bridal robes. Don Luis appeared clad in black, proud and somber as ever, and before sunrise, by candlelight on a cold and damp morning—it seems as though it had all happened yesterday—the Castilian was married to our young fräulein. The padrona, a Spanish officer, and I were the witnesses. At seven o'clock the carriage drove up and when it was packed Don Luis gave me a small box to place in the carriage. It was heavy and I knew it well; the padrona was accustomed to keep her gold coin in it. On Easter day the whole town knew that Don Luis d'Avila had carried off the beautiful Anna van Hoogstraten and had killed in a duel at Halle her betrothed, as he was on his way to Brussels, on Holy Thursday—scarcely twenty-four hours before the wedding.

"I shall never forget how the jonker raged on his arrival. The padrona refused to see him and gave out that she was ill, but she was as well as she could be in these latter years."

"And can you explain your mistress' mysterious conduct?" asked Wilhelm.

"Yes, sir; her reasons are plain as day. But it is growing late, and I must hurry; indeed, I know little about the details, for I was still a child myself when it happened. But Susanna has told me much that is well worth repeating. The excellenza's mother was a Chevreaux, and my mistress passed the best years of her life with her mother's sister, who spent the winters in Paris. It was at the time of the blessed King Francis, and you know that this great prince was a gallant gentleman and a bold knight, of whom it was said that he had broken as many hearts as lances. My padrona, who was

beautiful then, was one of the ladies of his court and King Francis distinguished her among many. But the fräulein knew how to guard her honor, for she had early found a cavalier in the gallant Marquis d'Avennes, to whom she was devoted and for whom she wept many bitter tears; for like master like man, and although the marquis wore her colors for five years and paid his *devoir* to her like a true knight, his eyes and heart wandered constantly from one to another. He always returned to his lady, however, and when the sixth year came round, the Chevreaux urged the marquis to make an end of his trifling and to think of marriage. My mistress began to prepare her outfit, and Susanna was a witness of how she consulted with the marquis as to whether she should sell or keep the properties and castles in the Netherlands. But the marriage still did not come off, for the marquis was obliged to go with the army to Italy and the fräulein lived in a state of constant anxiety about him; at that time it went ill with the French in my country, and the marquis often kept her waiting months for news. At last he came home and found in the Chevreaux's house the fräulein's little cousin grown into a beautiful girl. The remainder you can guess. The bud, Hortense, pleased the marquis better than the full-blown flower. The Chevreaux were noble, but deeply in debt, and the suitor, while he was fighting in Italy, had fallen heir to his uncle's large property, and so he did not sue in vain. My mistress returned to Holland. The jonker's father challenged the marquis, but no blood was spilled in the duel, and Marquis d'Avennes lived happily with Hortense de Chevreaux. Her son was the signorina's ill-fated betrothed. Do you understand, Herr Wilhelm? During half her life my mistress had cherished this hatred; to satisfy it her own kin was

sacrificed to Don Luis, but in this way she repaid the hated mother, by the death of her only son, for the anguish that she had endured for years through her.

The musician rolled into a ball the handkerchief with which he had wiped his forehead and asked dully:

"What else have you heard about Anna?"

"Little," answered Belotti. "The jonker tore her from his heart and calls Henrika his only daughter. Happiness forsakes those upon whom a father's curse rests, and the signorina assuredly has not found it. Don Luis was said to have been degraded to the rank of sub-lieutenant because of some mad escapade. And who knows what has become of the poor, beautiful signorina? The padrona sends her money from time to time through Signor Lamperi by way of Florence, but lately I have heard nothing about it."

"One more question, Belotti," said Wilhelm. "How could the jonker entrust Henrika to your mistress, after what happened to his elder daughter?"

"Money, accursed money! To keep his castle and not to lose the inheritance he gave up his child. The signorina was bargained for as a horse might be, and the jonker did not part with her cheaply. Drink, sir, for you look ill."

"It is nothing," answered Wilhelm, "but the fresh air will do me good. My thanks for your story, Belotti."

CHAPTER XIII.

On the afternoon of the 16th of May the burgomaster's wife was making an inspection of cupboards and presses. Her husband had gone to the Rathhaus, but before going he had told her that in the evening the representative of the prince, Herr Dietrich van Bronkhorst, the two seigneurs of Nordwyk, the clerk of the council, Van Hout, and some other prominent men of the city and friends of liberty, were to meet at his house in secret conference. Maria was to provide a generous repast, wine, etc., for the gentlemen's entertainment.

This request had an enlivening and cheering effect upon the young wife. She was delighted to be able to play the hostess in the sense in which it was regarded in her parents' house. How long it had been denied her to be present at a discussion of serious and weighty import. She had no lack of visitors—the friends and relatives of her husband's family who called upon her and Barbara begged her often enough to come and see them, but although there were many among them who showed themselves kindly disposed toward her, and whom she could not help respecting for their excellence, there was no one toward whom she was drawn with any degree of affection. Yes, Maria, whose life was not crowded with distractions, shrank from their coming, and when they were there she bore their presence as an unavoidable evil. The worthy matrons were all much older than she, and when they sat over their

cakes, stewed fruits and mulled wine, spinning, knitting and netting, talked of the evil days of the siege, of the care of children and the worries with servants, of washing and soap-making, or criticised severely the many incomprehensible but never-to-be-sanctioned things that other women had done, were doing or were about to do, the heart of the burgomaster's wife grew heavy, and her solitary room always seemed to her at such times a quiet haven of refuge.

Only when they spoke of the country's necessity and of the sacred duty of enduring for the cause, a second time if necessary, miseries of every description, did she become talkative and listen gladly to the plain-spoken women who, it was easy to see, were earnest in what they said; but when idle gossip went on for hours, it caused her actual pain. She could not escape, however, and had to endure it until the last one had departed; for after she had attempted to withdraw early on several occasions, Barbara had warned her kindly against it, and did not hide from her that she had found it a difficult task to defend her against the accusation of pride and incivility.

There was one woman in Leyden of whom the burgomaster's wife was sincerely fond. This was Frau van Hout, wife of the clerk of the council, but she was seldom to be seen, for although she was delicate and distinguished in appearance, she was obliged to bestir herself from morning till night, so as to keep her children and household in good condition on a narrow income.

Happier and brighter than she had been for many days, Maria approached the sideboard, where was set out the table service, and the cupboard where the silver was kept. Everything of value that the house possessed was set forth, shining and spotless,

on white, lace-trimmed, linen cloths. She selected what she needed, but much of the china and glass did not suit her; for they did not match, had been carelessly replaced, and many pieces were chipped and cracked.

When her mother had begun to get together her wedding outfit, Peter had expressed the wish that in such hard times the money might be saved and no useless purchases made. Of household articles of every description there was a superfluity in his home, and he would have thought it wrong to purchase so much as a plate. In truth, there was nothing lacking on the sideboard or in the cupboards, but she had not chosen the things herself; they belonged to her in a way, but not altogether, and the worst of it was that her eyes, accustomed to prettier things, could find no pleasure in the dull, marred pewter plates, the jugs, cups, and tankards decorated with crude figures in glaring colors. Neither was the coarse glassware to her taste, and, as she looked it over and selected what was necessary, she could not help thinking of her newly married friends who had shown her with shining eyes their brand-new household furnishings with as much pride and happiness as though every article were their own laborious handiwork. But even with what she had, she was able to set out the table prettily and daintily.

She and Adrian had gathered flowers in the garden by the city wall and picked delicate grasses in the meadows outside the gate. These she arranged tastefully in vases, and she was delighted when even the coarsest jars were made to look attractive with the vines that she had entwined about them. Adrian gazed at her in amazement. He would not have been surprised if, under her fingers, the somber dining-room had been transformed into a hall of crystal and pearl.

When the table was laid Peter came home for a moment. Before his guests arrived he intended to ride out to Valkenburg with Captain Allertssohn, Janus Dousa, and others to take a look at the fortifications. As he passed through the dining-room he waved his hand to his wife and said, with a glance at the table:

"These decorations were not necessary, least of all the flowers. We are to hold a serious conference and you have decked the table for a wedding-feast."

He saw that Maria's head sunk and adding pleasantly: "Let it remain as it is, as far as I am concerned," he left the room.

Maria remained standing irresolutely before her work. Bitter feelings began to stir within her again and she had already stretched out her hand toward one of the most prettily arranged vases, when Adrian raised his eyes to hers and said beseechingly:

"No, mother, you must not do that; it looks too beautiful."

Maria smiled, passed her hand over the lad's curls, and taking two cakes from a dish, gave them to him, saying:

"One is for you and one for Lieschen; we will let the flowers stay."

Adrian ran out with the cakes, but Maria gave another look at the table and thought to herself:

"Peter never wants anything but what is necessary; but surely that is not all, or the dear Lord would have made all birds with gray feathers."

When she had helped Barbara in the kitchen, she went to her room. There she arranged her hair, put a freshly starched ruff about her neck and carefully plaited lace in the low neck of her gown, but kept on her house-dress, since her husband did not wish to give a festive air to the meeting in his house.

Just as she had placed the last gold pin in her hair and was debating whether the place of honor should be given to Herr van Bronkhorst, as representative of the prince, or to the venerable Herr von Nordwyk, Trautchen knocked at the door and informed her that Doctor Bontius desired to speak with the burgomaster on a matter of pressing importance. The maid had told the doctor that her master had ridden out of the city, and he had asked to speak with her mistress.

Maria went at once to Peter's study. The physician was evidently in a hurry. Without any other salutation he raised the gold knob of his walking-stick to his peaked black hat, which was never removed from his head even at the bedside of a patient, and asked shortly and hurriedly:

"When will Meister Peter return?"

"In an hour," answered Maria. "Sit down, doctor."

"Another time. I cannot wait for your husband. Besides you can come with me without his consent."

"Doubtless; but we are expecting guests."

"True. If I have time I shall come too. The gentlemen can get on very well without me, but you are necessary to the sick person to whom I wish to take you."

"I do not know yet of whom you are speaking."

"No? Then I will repeat, of one who is suffering, and that ought to be enough for you."

"And you think I could——"

"You can do much more than you yourself know. Barbara presides in the kitchen, and I say once more: You can be of comfort to a sufferer."

"But, Herr Doctor——"

"Quick, I must beg you, for my time is limited. Will you make yourself useful—yes or no?"

The door into the dining-room had been left open. Maria looked once more at the table and thought of all that she had been looking forward to on this evening. But as the doctor prepared to take his leave she held him back and said:

"I will go."

Maria knew the ways of this rough, but noble and unselfish man. Without waiting for an answer she fetched her cloak, and preceded him down the stairs. As they passed the kitchen Doctor Bontius called to Barbara:

"Tell Meister Peter that I have taken his wife to see the sick Fräulein van Hoogstraten on the Nobelstrasse."

Maria could scarcely keep up with the doctor as he strode rapidly ahead of her and had difficulty in understanding him as he told her in abrupt sentences that all the Glipper friends of the Hoogstratens had left the city, that the old fräulein was dead, and that the servants had fled from fear of the plague, although there was no danger of that in this case, and Henrika was left alone. She had had a severe fever, but she had been much better for some days. "Misfortune has taken up its abode in the Glipper nest," he said. "Death did the old woman a service, when he took her away. The French maid, a weak creature, held out bravely at first, but collapsed after a few nights of watching, and was to have been carried to the Katharinen Hospital, but the Italian steward, who is not a bad fellow, objected and had her taken to the house of a Catholic washerwoman. He has gone with her to take care of her. There is no one left in the deserted house to tend the young fräulein but Sister Gonzaga, a good little nun, one of the three who have been permitted to remain in the old convent near you; but to cap the climax of our misfortunes the good woman scalded

her fingers to-day in heating a bath. The Catholic priest has remained unscathed at his post, but what can we men do in caring for the young girl? You doubtless suspect now why I have brought you. You ought not and cannot be a nurse to this stranger for any length of time, but unless things are to go ill with the fräulein she must have at her bedside a face to which she can become attached, and the dear Lord has endowed you with such a one. Look at the patient, talk to her, and if you are what I take you to be—but here we are at our destination."

The air in the darkened hall of the Hoogstraten house was heavy with musk. The news of the old fräulein's death had at once been sent to the Rathhaus by Doctor Bontius' representative, and an armed man who was walking back and forth in the hall, keeping watch, informed the doctor that the clerk of the council had already been there and had had seals placed on the doors.

On the stairs Maria laid her hand in alarm on her companion's arm; through an open door on the second story she saw in the dim light an indistinct figure moving hither and thither, up and down, in a peculiar way. Her voice was unsteady as she asked, pointing toward it with her finger:

"What is that?"

The doctor stopped as she did, and when he saw the strange something at which the burgomaster's wife was pointing he himself started back a pace. But he soon perceived the real nature of the spectral figure, and going ahead of Maria he cried cheerfully:

"What in the world are you doing on the floor, Father Damianus?"

"I am scrubbing the boards," was the quiet reply.

"You are too good for servants' work, Father,"

answered the doctor indignantly, "especially when there is so much money without an owner in the house, and we can find as many scrub-women as we want to-morrow."

"But not to-day, doctor, and nothing will persuade the fräulein to remain in that room any longer. You yourself prescribed sleep, and Sister Gonzaga says that Fräulein Henrika will not close her eyes in the room next to the one where the body is."

"Then the officers of the law should have carried her, bed and all, into the old lady's sitting-room."

"It was sealed, and so were all the good rooms on this floor. The officers were obliging and looked about for charwomen, but the poor creatures are too much in terror of the plague."

"Such rumors spread like witch-grass," cried the doctor. "No one sows it, but who can root it out once it is there?"

"Not you and not I," answered the priest. "The fräulein had to be brought into this room, but it looked dirty, and so I have been cleaning it. It will be better for the patient and the exercise cannot harm me."

The priest rose and said as he saw Maria:

"You bring a new nurse? That is right. There is no need for me to praise Sister Gonzaga, for you know her, but I give you my word that Fräulein Henrika will not endure her about her much longer, and as for me, as soon as the funeral is over I shall leave this house."

"You have done your share; but what is this about the Sister?" cried the doctor impatiently. "I would rather have your old Gonzaga with her scalded hand than— What has happened now?"

The priest went close to him and whispered, with a quick side glance at the burgomaster's wife:

"The Sister speaks through her nose, and the fräulein has told me that it annoys her and asked me to keep her away."

Doctor Bontius thought a moment and then said:

"There are eyes that cannot bear a bright light, and it is possible that certain sounds are unendurable to over-sensitive ears. Frau Bürgemeisterin, you have been kept waiting a long time. Please follow me."

It had grown dark. The curtains in the sick-room had been drawn and the lamp that was burning behind a screen gave but a feeble light.

The doctor stepped up to the bed, felt Henrika's pulse, prepared her in a low voice for the visitor he had brought, and then took up the lamp to see how his patient looked.

Maria now saw a pale face, with irregular features and a pair of dark eyes, whose size and brilliancy were in strange contrast to the sunken cheeks.

When old Gonzaga had returned the lamp to its place the doctor said:

"Excellent! Go now, Sister, and change the bandage on your arm and then lie down." Then he motioned the burgomaster's wife to approach.

Henrika's face had touched Maria strangely. She thought it beautiful, but the large eyes and the firmly-shut lips impressed her as more unusual than attractive. She obeyed the doctor's signal at once, approached the bed, and said kindly that she had been glad to come to keep her company for awhile and to see if there was anything she desired.

At these words Henrika raised herself in bed and cried with a sigh of relief:

"How good that sounds! Thank you, doctor. A human voice at last! If you want to make me happy, Frau Bürgemeisterin, go on talking, no

matter about what. Please come and sit down here. With Sister Gonzaga's hands, your voice, and the doctor's—what shall I call it?—with Doctor Bontius' frankness, it will not be hard to let myself be nursed back to health."

"Good, good," murmured the doctor. "Sister Gonzaga's injuries are trifling and she will stay with you, and when it is time for you to go to sleep, you are to be carried to another room. You, Frau Bürgemeisterin, may stay here for an hour, and that must be enough for to-day. I will go to your house and send the man with a lantern for you."

When the ladies were alone, Maria said:

"You think a great deal of the sound of voices; I do also and doubtless more than I ought to. To be sure, I have never gone through a severe illness."

"This is my first," answered Henrika, "but now I know what it is to be forced to submit to everything one does not like and to be doubly sensitive to things that are disagreeable to one. I would rather die than be an invalid."

"You have lost your aunt," said Maria sympathetically.

"She died early this morning. We had little in common but blood."

"Are your parents alive?"

"My father only; but why do you ask?"

"He will be glad of your recovery. Doctor Bontius says that you will soon be quite well."

"I believe so too," answered Henrika confidently, and then went on in a low voice without noticing Maria: "There is one nice thing. When I am well again, I shall be able— Are you fond of music?"

"Yes, dear fräulein."

"Not merely as a pastime, but because you feel that it is necessary to your life?"

"You must be quieter, dear fräulein. Music—yes, I think my life would be much poorer than it is without it."

"You sing?"

"I have not sung much here, but when I was a girl, we used to sing every evening in Delft."

"You, the soprano, of course."

"Yes, fräulein."

"Drop the fräulein and call me Henrika."

"With all my heart, if you will call me Maria or Frau Maria."

"I will try. Don't you think that we might practice some songs together?"

Just then Sister Gonzaga entered the room and announced that the wife of the collector of taxes, Cornelius, was there and wished to know if she could be of any service.

"What does this mean?" asked Henrika impatiently. "I don't know her."

"She is the mother of the musician Wilhelm," said Maria.

"Oh!" exclaimed Henrika. "Shall I have her come in, Maria?"

The burgomaster's wife shook her head and answered decidedly:

"No, Henrika. More than one caller might hurt you, and then——"

"Then?"

"She is a good, kind woman, but I think her brusque manner, her heavy tread, and her loud voice would annoy you. I will go to her for you."

"Receive her kindly and tell her to remember me to her son. I am not very ill, but I see that you understand me; such ponderous attentions would not agree with me just now."

When Maria had executed her errand and had been talking for a time to Henrika, the wife of the

clerk of the council was announced. Her husband, who had been present when the doors of the house of death were sealed, had told her about the forsaken girl and she had come to see whether she wanted for anything.

"You might receive her," said Maria, "for I am sure she would please you; but there is another knock and you have talked enough for to-day. Try to sleep. I will go home with Frau van Hout and to-morrow I will come again, if you will let me."

"Come, oh, please come!" cried Henrika. "There is something more you would like to say to me?"

"There is, indeed, Fräulein Henrika. You ought not to stay in this desolate house. There is plenty of room in ours. Be our guest until your father——"

"Yes, let me come to you!" cried Henrika with moist eyes. "Take me away from here, take me away—and I will be grateful to you all my life long."

CHAPTER XIV.

It had been weeks since Maria had tripped upstairs as joyously as she did to-day. She would have sung if it had been becoming; but she was a little uneasy none the less, for perhaps her husband would not be pleased at her having invited upon her own responsibility a stranger, and a sick stranger with Spanish sympathies at that, to be their guest.

As she passed the dining-room she heard the gentlemen conferring together. Then Peter began to speak. She was struck by the pleasing depth of his voice and she said to herself that Henrika would like to hear it. A few moments later she entered the room to welcome her husband's guests. Glad excitement and the rapid walk in the May evening, that was still warm after the warm day, had flushed her cheeks, and as she crossed the threshold timidly and with a deferential greeting, which showed none the less the pleasure the presence of such guests caused her, she made such a charming picture that no one present was unimpressed by it. The elder Van der Does slapped Peter on the shoulder and then struck the palm of his hand with his fist, as if to say: "Well done!" Janus Dousa whispered gayly to Van Hout, who was a good Latin scholar:

"*Oculi sunt in amore duces.*"

Captain Allertssohn sprang up and raised his hand to his hat in military salute, Van Bronkhorst, the representative of the prince, expressed his admiration

by a courtly bow, Doctor Bontius smiled contentedly as one who has accomplished his object, and Peter tried proudly and happily to attract his wife's attention. But he did not succeed, for Maria, finding that she was the target for so many glances, dropped her eyes with a blush and said in a firmer tone than one would have expected from her timid manner:

"Welcome, gentlemen! My greeting comes late, but truly I would have been glad to offer it earlier."

"I can testify to that," cried Doctor Bontius rising to shake her hand more heartily than he had ever done before. Then he motioned to Peter and cried to the company around the table:

"Excuse the burgomaster for a moment."

And standing apart with the husband and wife near the door, he said:

"You have invited a new guest to the house, Frau Bürgemeisterin; I will never drink another drop of malmsey if I am wrong."

"How do you know?" asked Maria merrily.

"I can see it in your face."

"And the young lady will be most heartily welcome," added Peter.

"Then you know?" asked Maria.

"The doctor did not keep his suspicions to himself."

"Well then, yes, the invalid is very ready to come to us and to-morrow——"

"No, I shall send for her to-day," Peter interrupted.

"To-day? But it is too late; she may be asleep, our guests are here, and our guest-chamber—" exclaimed Maria, looking disapprovingly and irresolutely from the doctor to her husband.

"Calm yourself, child," answered Peter. "The doctor has ordered a covered litter from the Katharinen Hospital, Jan and a constable shall carry

it, and Barbara has finished in the kitchen and is now preparing her own room for the young lady."

"And," broke in the doctor, "the invalid may be able to sleep here. Besides, it will more than please our haughty young lady to be carried through the streets in the dark and unobserved."

"Yes, yes," said Maria dejectedly, "that may be true; but I had been thinking—one ought not to be over hasty."

"Shall you be glad to have the fräulein as a guest?" asked Peter.

"Yes, indeed."

"Then do not let us employ any half measures. Barbara is motioning to us; the litter has come, doctor. Go and conduct this night procession, but do not keep us waiting long for you."

The burgomaster returned to his seat and the doctor left the room.

Maria followed him. In the hall he laid his hand upon her arm and asked:

"Do you wish to hear again what I think of you?"

"No," answered the burgomaster's wife in a tone that sounded gay but which nevertheless betrayed the disappointment that she felt. "No—but you have taught me that you are a man who knows how to spoil one's greatest pleasures."

"I will provide others in the place of them," retorted the doctor with a laugh, as he went down the stairs. He was Peter's oldest friend and had raised many objections to the burgomaster's marriage, in these troublous times, with a woman so much his junior, but to-day he showed himself satisfied with Van der Werff's choice.

Maria returned to her guests, filled and handed them their glasses, and then betook herself to her sister-in-law's room, to help her prepare for the

invalid's arrival. She did not do it unwillingly, but it seemed to her that she would have gone about the work with far greater pleasure on the morning of the following day.

Barbara's roomy apartment overlooked the courtyard. One could hear there nothing of the conference that was being held in the dining-room, and yet the meeting was by no means a quiet one, for these men, although animated by a common purpose, were often disagreed as to the ways and means of carrying it out successfully.

There they sat, the courageous sons of a little nation, the noble leaders of a commonwealth poor in numbers and means of defense, who had taken upon themselves to make a stand against the greatest power and the strongest armies of their time. They knew that the clouds that had for weeks threatened from a distance were drawing on more and more rapidly, and were about to gather above Leyden and burst in fearful violence, for Van der Werff had summoned them to his house because a letter from the prince addressed to Van Bronkhorst and himself contained the news that the stadtholder of King Philip of Spain had instructed Del Campo Valdez to besiege Leyden a second time and force it to surrender. They knew it would be months before William of Orange could raise an army to relieve the city or divert the hostile troops from their object; they had learned how little was to be expected from the queen of England and from the Protestant princes of Germany, and the fate of their more powerful neighbor, Haarlem, rose a hideous warning before their eyes. But they knew that they were serving in a good cause, they counted upon the fidelity, the self-sacrifice, and the statesmanship of Orange, they were ready to die rather than become subject body and soul to the Spanish tyrant. Deep

and earnest was their faith in God's justice, and glad the confidence of each in his own resolute manhood.

And truly, the men who sat at the flower-decked table and who understood so well how to empty their huge tankards that flask after flask of Peter's malmsey and Rhine wine had to be brought up from the cellar, the men who made such inroads upon the round pastries and the huge roasts, rich and juicy as no other country can supply—did not look as though fear had brought them together.

The hat is the emblem of liberty, and the free man keeps his hat on his head. Thus some of the burgomaster's guests sat with covered heads, and how well the high plaited caps of dark-red velvet adorned with handsome ostrich plumes became the fresh old face of the elder Herr von Nordwyk and the keen, scholarly features of his nephew, Janus Dousa; how well the broad-brimmed hat from which waved ostrich plumes of blue and yellow—the colors of the House of Orange—looked on the curling locks of young Herr van Warmond, Jan van Duivenvoorde! How healthful and strongly marked were the faces of the other men! Fresh color was absent from few of the cheeks, and sturdy enjoyment of life, clear understanding, unshakable resolution, and firmness of purpose flashed from many blue eyes around this table. Even the black-robed senators, whose plaited ruffs and smooth white collars became them well, did not look as if the dust of official documents had injured their health. The mustache or full beard gave them also a manly appearance. They were all willing, even glad to sacrifice themselves and their all for a great spiritual blessing, and yet they looked as though they took a wholesome pleasure in life; not a trace of exaltation spoke in their intelligent, sensible faces; in the eyes of the

young Herr van Warmond alone shone something of the sort, and Janus Dousa's gaze often seemed turned inward as though seeking there for hidden things; and at such times his clearly cut, irregular features were strangely attractive.

The circle that had gathered about the brightly lighted table presented a gay and brilliant spectacle. How well the buff leather doublets and the sashes of colored silk of the Jonker van Warmond, Colonel Mulder, and Captain Allertssohn, and the scarlet coat of gallant Dirk Smaling stood out against the somber black of the robes worn by the Pastor Verstroot, the burgomaster, Van Hout, and their associates. Van Bronkhorst's suit of violet and the dark hues of the fur-trimmed mantles of the elder Van der Does and Herr van Montfort mingled agreeably with the lighter and darker shades. All that bore the name of care seemed banished from this circle of color and light.

But danger stood at the door. Any day the Spanish vanguard might appear before Leyden. Many preparations had been made. English allies were to occupy the fortifications of Alfen and defend the Gouda lock; the works of Valkenburg had been strengthened and entrusted to other British soldiers; the city troops, the burgher guard and the volunteers were thoroughly drilled. There was no desire to bring foreign troops into the town, for during the first leaguer they had proved much more burdensome than useful, and there was little fear of the city being taken by storm, protected as it was by water, wall and tower.

What excited the gentlemen the most was the news Van Hout had brought. The rich Baersdorp, one of the four burgomasters, who was the largest grain dealer in Leyden, had undertaken to buy up, in the name of the city, large quantities of bread-

stuffs. Several ship loads of corn and rye had been delivered by him the previous evening, but he was still behindhand with three-quarters of what had been ordered. He openly acknowledged that he had given no definite orders for a further supply, as, owing to the good prospect of heavy crops, a fall in the price of corn was expected on the exchanges of Rotterdam and Amsterdam, and there would surely be several weeks before the beleaguering of the city began anew.

Van Hout was full of indignation, especially as two of the four burgomasters had sided with their colleague. The elder Von Nordwyk agreed with Van Hout and cried:

"All due respect to *your* worth, Meister Peter, but your three associates belong to those friends whom one would be glad to exchange for open enemies."

"Herr van Noyelles," interrupted Colonel Mulder, "said the truth about them when he wrote to the prince that the gallows was the place for them."

"And so it is," broke in Captain Allertssohn, "so long as hangman's rope and traitors' necks are made for each other."

"Traitors—no," said Van der Werff decidedly. "Call them cowards, call them selfish and base—but not one of them is a traitor."

"Right, Meister Peter, traitors they certainly are not, and perhaps cowardice has nothing to do with their actions," added the elder Von Nordwyk. "Any one who has eyes to see and ears to hear with knows the opinions of the men of the old city families, who have been brought up from the cradle as future senators; and I am not speaking of those of Leyden alone, but of Gouda and Delft, Rotterdam and Dortrecht. Among a hundred, sixty would bear the Spanish yoke, even religious re-

straint, willingly, as long as their liberties and rights were respected. The cities must rule, and in them, they themselves; that is all they wish. Whether there is preaching in the churches or reading of mass, whether a Hollander or a Spaniard rules, is a secondary matter. I except those present, for they would not be here if they thought as those of whom I speak."

"I thank you," said Dirk Smaling, "but with all respect to your judgment, you have drawn too dark a picture. May I ask whether the nobility does not stand for its rights and privileges?"

"To be sure, Herr Dirk; but their privileges are commonly of an older date than yours," answered the old man. "Look you, the noble needs a ruler. He is a lusterless star if he lacks the light of the sun by which he shines. I, and with me all the nobles who have sworn fidelity to him, believe that our sun can be none other than Orange, who is one of us, who knows us, loves us, understands us; not Philip, who comprehends nothing of what passes within and around us, who is a stranger to us and abhors us. We stand by William with our lives and possessions, for as I have already said, we need a sun, that is, a monarch—the cities, however, believe they have light of their own and wish to shine as independent planets. True, they feel that in these troubled times they need a leader and that they can find none better and wiser and more devoted to them than Orange; but if it comes about —and Heaven grant it may—that the Spanish yoke is shattered, then even William's rule will seem irksome to them, for they are themselves too fond of ruling. In short: the cities endure a ruler, the nobility rally about him and need him. Things cannot be well, until noble, burgher, and peasant learn to follow him gladly and join together to do

battle under his leadership for the most precious gifts of life."

"True," said Van Hout. "The well-disposed nobility may serve as an example to the ruling classes here and in other cities, but the people, the poor working people, who know what is at stake, have not yet lost, thank God, the true appreciation for what you call the most precious gifts of life. They wish to be Hollanders; they curse with honest hatred the Spanish butchers; they wish to serve their God as their consciences dictate and believe as their hearts tell them; they call the prince their Father William. Wait a little! As soon as distress is upon us, the poor and lowly will stand firm, when the rich and great vacillate and deny the good cause."

"They are to be depended upon," said Van der Werff, "thoroughly depended upon."

"And because I know them," cried Van Hout, "we shall conquer with God's help, come what may."

Janus Dousa had been staring into his glass. He now raised his head and said with a quick gesture:

"It is strange that those that struggle with their hands for existence, and whose untutored minds only act when the needs of the day require it, are the most willing to sacrifice the little they have for spiritual blessings."

"Yes," said the pastor. "The kingdom of heaven stands open to the simple of heart. It is a wonderful sight to see how the poor and ignorant respect religion, freedom, and the fatherland far more highly than the proud possessions of this world, the golden calf around which the world is pressing."

"My class is receiving scant praise to-day,"

answered Dirk Smaling; "but I ask you to kindly remember that we are playing a high and dangerous game, and that the moneyed classes have the lion's share at stake."

"By no means," broke in Van Hout. "The highest stake for which the dice are being cast is life, and this has equal worth for rich and poor. But those who will hold back—I think I know them—have no simple motto or device, but proud escutcheous above their doors. Wait and see."

"Yes, wait and see," said Van der Werff; "but at present there are things nearer at hand for our consideration. Day after to-morrow will be Ascension Day, when the great annual fair is to take place. Yesterday and the day before more than one foreign trader and traveler entered the gates. Shall we allow the booths to be set up, or postpone the fair to another time? If the enemy hurries, there will be great confusion, and we shall be throwing a rich prize into his hands. I ask for your opinion, gentlemen."

"The traders ought to be protected from loss and the fair postponed," said Dirk van Montfort.

"No," answered Van Hout, "for if the prohibition is issued we shall be depriving the small tradesmen of their profits and prematurely disheartening them."

"Let them have their fair," cried Janus Dousa. "There is no need to give coming trouble the satisfaction of saddening the happy present. If you wish to act wisely, follow the advice of Horace."

"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof, the Scriptures tell us," added the pastor, and Captain Allertssohn cried:

"By my soul, yes! My soldiers, the burgher guard and the volunteers must have their parade.

The soldier first feels what he is when he is in full uniform, armed and equipped, and fair faces smile at him, old men wave to him, and children run shouting before him."

So it was decided to let the fair take place. While other questions were being eagerly discussed Henrika found a loving welcome in Barbara's pleasant room. When the sick girl had fallen asleep Maria looked in upon her guests but did not return to the table, for their cheeks were flushed and they no longer spoke in turn, but talked to each other as inclination prompted.

CHAPTER XV.

On the day following the sitting of the council Burgomaster van der Werff, Van Hout, a notary, and two constables repaired to the Nobelstrasse to settle the affairs of the old Fräulein van Hoogstraten. The city fathers had decided to confiscate the deserted houses of the Glippers and use whatever property was left behind to the best advantage of the common cause.

The old gentlewoman's opinions were universally known, and as Leyden was forbidden to her next of kin, the Hoogstratens and Matenesse van Wibisma, it became the duty of the city to represent the heirs. It was to be expected that Glippers only would be remembered in the will, and if this were the case, the revenue from the personal and real estate would revert to the city until the deserters thought better of it and their conduct permitted the authorities to reopen the gates to them. Whichever of the heirs continued to favor the Spaniards and work against the cause of freedom, his share of the inheritance would fall to the city. These measures were nothing new. King Philip had set the example, for at his pleasure not only the estates of countless victims unjustly executed; of followers of the new religion banished or gone into exile of their own accord, but also the possessions of good Catholic patriots had been confiscated. When one has been the anvil so many years it is pleasant to play the hammer; and if it was not always done in a wise and moderate way

there was always the excuse of a hundredfold more cruel treatment at the hands of the Spaniards. It would have been unchristian to repay like with like, but in return for mortal blows they gave only hard knocks, and did not seek the Glippers' lives.

At the door of the house of death the members of the council found Wilhelm Corneliussohn and his mother; they had come to offer Henrika a welcome to their home. Frau Cornelius, who had at first refused to extend her love of her neighbor to the Glipper fräulein, was disappointed to find herself deprived of the opportunity of doing a good deed and expressed her feelings in her blunt way.

In the hall stood Belotti, no longer in the silken hose and satin-trimmed livery of a house steward, but in simple burgher attire. He explained to the musician and Peter that in the first place he was staying in Leyden because he could not make up his mind to leave the sick Denise in the lurch; but other considerations also held him back and principally, although he did not like to admit it, the feeling, which had been strengthened by long years of service, of being one of the Hoogstraten family. His account books had been found in good order, and the fräulein's counsel had readily paid him the balance in his favor. His savings were securely invested, and, as the frugal old man had never touched the interest, had grown considerably. Nothing kept him in Leyden, but still he could not go until everything had been wound up in the house where he had ruled so long.

He had inquired daily for the ladies' health, and after the excellenza's death he continued to remain in Leyden, although Denise had begun to improve; he considered it his duty to pay the last honors to his dead mistress.

The gentlemen were glad to find Belotti in the

house. The notary had managed the latter's little fortune and esteemed him as an honest man. He now asked Belotti to act as guide to him and his companions. It was necessary, above all, to find the dead woman's will. There must be one in existence, for it had been in the notary's keeping until the day following Henrika's illness, when the old lady had sent for it, as she wished to make some alterations. Of its contents, however, he knew nothing, for his partner, now dead, and to whose business he had succeeded, had been present at its execution.

The steward first led them into the padrona's sitting-room and boudoir, but though they searched desks, trunks and cupboards, and came upon letters, money and jewels in many boxes and caskets, the document was not to be found.

The gentlemen thought that it must be in some secret compartment and ordered one of the constables to summon a locksmith. Belotti made no objections, but he listened with particular attention to the low sound of singing that came from the sleeping-room where the body lay. There, he knew, the document was most likely to be found, but he wished to let the priest continue undisturbed the consecration of his mistress. As soon as all was quiet in the adjoining room he asked the gentlemen to follow him.

The lofty apartment into which he led them was filled with clouds of incense. A large bedstead above which a pointed canopy of heavy silk reached to the ceiling stood in the background. In the middle of the room was placed the coffin in which lay the dead woman. A linen, lace-trimmed cloth covered the face. The delicate hands were folded and clasped lightly about a much worn rosary. The form was concealed by a costly covering, in the center of which lay a beautifully carved crucifix of ivory.

The men bowed mutely before the body. Belotti went nearer, and when he saw the padrona's well-known hands the old man's breast was shaken with convulsive sobs. Then he knelt beside the coffin, pressed his lips to the cold, slender fingers, and a tear, the only one that was shed for this dead woman, fell upon the hands forever folded.

The burgomaster and his companions did not disturb him, nor did they when he pressed his forehead against the coffin and offered a short, silent prayer. When he had risen and an elderly priest in full canonicals had left the room, Father Damianus motioned to the acolyte with whom he had been standing in the background, and with his and Belotti's aid placed the lid upon the coffin, then turning to Peter van der Werff, he said:

"We intend to bear the fräulein to her rest at midnight, so that no annoyance may be caused."

"It is well," answered the burgomaster, "and whatever may come we shall not send you from the city. But if you prefer to join the Spaniards——"

Father Damianus shook his head, and interrupting the burgomaster, said quietly:

"No; I was born in Utrecht and I gladly pray for the freedom of Holland."

"Those are noble words," cried Van Hout. "Your hand, Father!"

"Here it is, and as long as you do not change the '*haec libertatis ergo*' on your money to '*haec religionis ergo*,' those words shall not be unsaid."

"A free country and freedom of faith for all, for you and yours as well," said the burgomaster, "is what we want. Doctor Bontius has spoken of you to me, good Father; you have cared nobly for this dead woman. Inter her according to the rites of your church; we have come to set in order the worldly goods that she has left behind. Perhaps this box contains the will"

"No," answered the priest. "When she was taken ill she opened the sealed document in my presence, and whenever she felt strong enough she added a few words. An hour before her death she gave orders to have the notary called, but before he arrived she was dead. I could not remain constantly with the body, so I placed the parchment in the linen-press. Here is the key."

They soon found the opened will. The burgomaster unfolded it quietly, and as he read it aloud, Van Hout and the notary looked over his shoulder.

Several churches and convents, where masses were to be said for the fräulein's soul, and her nearest of kin were to divide the property. Belotti and Denise were remembered with small legacies.

"It is fortunate," said Van Hout, "that this paper is a piece of paper and nothing more."

"The will is invalid," added the notary, "for it was taken from me with the express intention of changing it. Turn the document over, Meister Peter. There is something more to be read there."

The task that the men now had before them was no light one, for the sick woman had scribbled on the blank side of the paper, up and down, here and there, short notes, probably as memoranda for the making of a new will.

At the very top a cross was drawn with an unsteady hand, and underneath: "Pray for us! All shall be left to the Holy Church."

Farther down was written: "Nico. The lad pleases me. The castle on the dunes. Ten thousand gulden in money. To be secured to him. His father shall not touch it. Expressly to be stated why he is disinherited. He was secretly married to the daughter of Van Vliet of Haarlem. Under

pitiful pretexts he left her to enter into another marriage. If he has forgotten it, I have not, and I will make him suffer for it. Nico shall realize that false love is poison. It has ruined my life—ruined, ruined."

The last word was repeated several times.

On the right-hand margin of the sheet were a number of short notes.

"Anna, ten thousand gulden. Well secured. Otherwise they will fall into the clutches of that bird of prey, D'Avila."

"Henrika, three times as much. Her father shall pay her the money from the amount he owes me. Where he is to get it is his affair. Our accounts will be evened in this way."

"Belotti has acted badly. Shall be overlooked."

"Denise may keep what was given to her."

In the middle of the document was written in large characters underlined two or three times:

"The ebony box with the Hoogstraten and D'Avila arms on the lid is to be sent to the widow of the Marquis d'Avennes. She is to be found at Château Rochebrun in Normandy."

The men who had deciphered this sentence together looked at each other in silence, until Van Hout exclaimed:

"What a confused mixture of malice and feminine weakness! No matter how cold a woman's heart may seem, ice flowers are always to be found there."

"I am sorry for the young lady at your house, Herr Peter," said the notary, "for it would be easier to draw sparks from rye bread than such a sum from that poor devil, who is head over ears in debt. The daughter will be injured by the father; that is what I call kinsmanlike treatment."

"What can be in the casket?" asked the notary,

"There it is," cried Van Hout.

"Bring it here, Belotti."

"We must open it," said the notary, "for perhaps she is trying to get her principal valuables over the border."

"Open it? Against the dead woman's express wish?" asked Van der Werff.

"Certainly!" cried the notary. "We were sent here to take account of the property. The lid holds firmly. Take the picklock, meister. That will soon open it."

The city authorities were not to find any treasures in the casket, nothing but letters of various dates. There were not many. Those at the bottom, and much faded, contained avowals of love from the Marquis d'Avennes, the more recent ones were short and signed Don Luis d'Avila. Van Hout, who understood Spanish, read them hastily. As he came to the end of the last, he cried with lively indignation:

"We have here the key to an infamous deed. Do you remember the sensation that was caused four years ago by the duel in which the Marquis d'Avennes fell a victim to a Spanish bully? In this letter the miserable bravo writes that he has—I will translate it, it is well worth the trouble. The first part is of no consequence; here: 'Now that it has been granted me to cross swords with the marquis and, not without some danger to myself, to kill him, a fate that he seems to have deserved, seeing that he had aroused your displeasure to so great an extent, the condition that you imposed upon me is fulfilled and I hope to-morrow to receive, through your favor, the sweetest of rewards. Tell Donna Anna, my adored betrothed, that I will lead her to the altar early to-morrow morning, for the D'Avennes are influential and by the following day

my safety may be imperiled. As regards the rest, I rely upon the generosity of my patroness.'"

Van Hout flung the letter upon the table and cried: "Look what a dainty hand the bravo writes. And, 'fore God, the lady to whom this murderous token was to be sent must be the mother of the unfortunate marquis who was killed by the Spanish cutthroat."

"Yes," said Belotti, "I can confirm your suspicions. The marquise was the wife of the man who broke faith with Fräulein van Hoogstraten. She who lies there saw many suns rise and set, before her revenge was ripe."

"Into the fire with the thing!" cried Van Hout vehemently.

"No," answered Peter. "We will not send the letters, but you shall keep them in the archives. The mills of the gods grind slowly, and who knows what good purpose these letters may yet serve?"

Van Hout nodded assent and said as he collected the papers: "I think that the dead woman's property will come in well for the city."

"The prince will dispose of it," answered Van der Werff. "How long have you served the fräulein, Belotti?"

"Fifteen years."

"Then remain in Leyden for the present, for I think that you may hope for the legacy that was originally intended for you. I will advocate your claim."

A few hours before the midnight burial of the old fräulein, Herr Matenesse van Wibisma and his son, Nicolas, appeared before the city gates, but they were refused admittance by the gate-keeper, although they both brought forward their relative's death as a reason for entering. Henrika's father did not appear, as he had gone a few days before to attend a tourney at Cologne.

CHAPTER XVI.

At noon on the twenty-sixth of May, the day of the ascension of our Lord, the ringing of bells announced the opening of the great fair.

The ancient custom of making the circuit of the parish boundaries had long since given place to a religious festival, but the name of "Ommegang" continued to be associated with that of the fair, and, even after the new religion had gained the mastery, all sorts of processions took place at the opening of the fair.

In Roman Catholic times the cross had been borne through the streets in a solemn procession in which all Leyden was accustomed to take part; now the banners of the city and standards with the colors of the House of Orange headed the train, and were followed by the nobles on horseback, the city authorities in robes of state, the clergy in black gowns, the volunteers in full uniform, the guilds with their emblems, and long, jubilant lines of school children. Even the poorest invested in something new for their offspring on this day. Never did the mothers braid their little girls' hair more carefully than for this procession. In spite of the hard times, many a stiver from a lean purse was spent for fresh ribbons and new shoes, for caps and gay-colored stockings. The sun might have been reflected in the little girls' smoothly brushed hair, and the big boys and the little urchins made a braver show than the flowers in Herr van Mont-

fort's garden, by which the procession had to pass. Each lad wore in his cap, beside the feather, a green sprig, and the smaller the little man was, the larger must be the sprig of green. There was no lack of loud talking and merry shouting, for as each child passed his house, he called to his mother, his grandparents, and the servants, who had remained at home, and as soon as one raised his voice, others speedily joined him. Nor did the grown people remain quiet as the procession approached the Rathhaus, the headquarters of the various rifle corps, the guild halls, or the residences of popular men, and the universal rejoicing was increased and encouraged by the ringing of the bells, the huzzas of the sailors on both arms of the Rhine and on the canals, the playing of the musicians on the street corners, and the reports of mortar and cannon, which the gunner and his assistants were firing from the citadel. It was a merry turmoil in the glad springtime. This jovial throng seemed to be basking in the secure enjoyment of peace and prosperity. Among the gentlemen of the council alone were grave faces to be seen; but the children and guilds behind them were not conscious of them, and so the rejoicing went on without interruption until the churches swallowed up the procession and from pulpits sounded words so earnest and full of warning as to make many a man grow thoughtful.

All three phases of time belong to mankind—to the old man belongs the past; to the youth the future, but to the child the present. What did the lads and lasses of Leyden, released from school during the fair, care for the danger close at hand? Whoever, on this day, or during the great linen fair on Friday, or on the following days, was given a penny to spend, or whoever had but eyes to see, ears to hear, and nose to smell with, passed with his

comrades through the rows of booths, paused before the camels and dancing-bears, or gazed into the open drinking booths, where to the strains of bag-pipe, clarionet, and violin, danced, not only girls and young men, but their merry elders; sampled gingerbread and other delicacies with the solemnity of connoisseurs, or followed the trumpet-blasts with which the quack doctor's negro attendant attracted the crowd.

Adrian, the burgomaster's son, also wandered day after day, alone, or with his companions, among the splendors of the fair, and often clutched with a comfortable feeling of opulence at the leather purse that hung at his belt, for it contained several stivers that had come to him from various sources—from his father, mother, Barbara, and his godmother. Three times had Captain van Duivenvoorde, his particular friend, on whose gallant horse he had often sat, taken him to a waffle stand that he might eat to his heart's content, and thus Adrian's small fortune was but little diminished on the Tuesday following Ascension Day. He intended to buy something big and fine with it; a knight's sword or a cross-bow, or perhaps—but this thought seemed too great a temptation to him—the huge sheet of gingerbread, plastered with almonds, that was displayed as a show piece in the booth of a Delft baker. He and Lieschen could nibble for weeks at this giant cake if they were frugal, and frugality is an admirable virtue. At all events, there must be something left over for "bruderchens," the toothsome, spiced cakes that were baked at many stands before the eyes of the passers-by.

On Tuesday afternoon his way took him past the famous Rotterdam "bruderchen" shop. In front of the booth decked with mirrors and gay pictures, in a tall armchair that stood high above its sur-

roundings, sat a stout, comely woman, in the prime of life, pouring rapidly, and with astonishing skill, upon a heated sheet of iron provided with numerous indentations a fluid batter, which she took from a huge pot. Her assistant quickly turned with a fork the tiny cakes that browned quickly in the hollows of the metal surface, and when baked, laid them daintily on small plates. The waiter prepared them for purchasers by placing a large piece of yellow butter on the smoking pile. A delightful odor, which reminded one only too strongly of past delights, rose from the fireplace, and Adrian's fingers were already feeling the contents of his purse, when the negro's trumpet sounded, and the quack doctor's cart drew up directly in front of the "bruderchen" booth.

The famous Doctor Morpurgo was an imposing-looking man, dressed altogether in scarlet and wearing a thin, black beard that fell upon his breast. His movements were measured and elegant, the bows and gestures with which he greeted the assembled throng gracious and condescending. As soon as a sufficient number of the curious had assembled about his cart, which was laden with boxes and bottles, he began to speak in broken Dutch, interlarded with many foreign words.

He praised the goodness of the Providence that had created the marvel of the human organism. Everything was arranged in the best and wisest way, but in one respect nature made a poor showing in the presence of experts.

"Do you know where the trouble lies, ladies and gentlemen?" he asked.

"In the purse," cried a lusty barber's apprentice; "it keeps growing thinner every day."

"Right, my son," answered the quack graciously, "but nature made a mistake in that great cavern

from which your answer comes. Your teeth are a bungling piece of workmanship. They come with pain, they decay prematurely, and as long as they remain they torment every one who does not treat them with care. But art corrects nature. You see this box—" and then he launched forth in praise of a tooth-powder invented by him and of a mixture for the cure of toothache. Then he passed to the human head and described in vivid colors the numerous ills to which it was subject. But these, too, could be cured, unquestionably cured; it was only necessary to buy his arcanum. It was to be had for a song, and whoever had it could sweep away, as with a broom, every kind of headache.

Adrian listened with open mouth to the learned doctor. From the hot stove before the "bruderchen" booth, most enticing odors were wafted to him, and he would have liked exceedingly to treat himself to a plateful of fresh cakes. The baker's comfortable wife even waved her spoon at him, but he closed his hand about his purse and turned his eyes once more toward the quack, whose cart was surrounded by men and women buying tinctures and medicines.

In his father's house, the strange young lady lay ill. He had twice been taken in to see her, and the beautiful, pale face and the great dark eyes had filled his heart with pity. The clear, deep voice in which she had spoken a few words to him had seemed marvelous and had sunk deep into his soul. One morning he had awakened to find her there, and since then his mother was seldom to be seen, and the house was even quieter than usual; for every one walked softly, spoke in a hushed voice, tapped carefully on a window instead of using the knocker, and whenever Lieschen or he laughed aloud, or, in a moment of forgetfulness, ran up or

down the stairs, Barbara, their mother, or Trautchen would appear and whisper to them: "Softly, children, softly, the fräulein has a headache."

There in the cart stood a number of bottles that promised relief from this malady, and the famous Morpurgo seemed to be a very sensible man and not a buffoon like other quack doctors, and the wife of the baker, Wilhelm Peterssohn, who stood beside him and whom he knew, was saying to her companion that the doctor's remedies were good, for they had cured an intimate friend of hers of a bad attack of erysipelas.

This remark determined the boy in his resolve. Fleeting visions of sword, cross-bow, gingerbread, and the toothsome "bruderchen" rose before him, but he pushed them resolutely aside, held his breath so that he could not smell the seductive odors, and walked hastily toward the cart. Arrived there, he loosened his purse from his girdle, shook its contents into his hand, showed the money to the doctor, who had fixed his black eyes benevolently on the unusual customer, and asked: "Will that be enough?"

"For what?"

"For the medicine for headaches."

The quack sorted with his forefinger the small coins in Adrian's hand and said gravely: "No, my son, but I am always glad to advance the cause of knowledge. There is yet much for you to learn at school and headache will hinder you. Here is the medicine and, as it is you, I will also give you this prescription for still another arcanum."

Adrian hurriedly wrapped in the printed paper the bottle the quack had given him, and, with his dearly bought treasure in his hand, ran toward home. On the way he was accosted by Captain Allertssohn, who came toward him with the musician Wilhelm.

"Have you seen my Andreas, Master Ne'er-do-well?" he inquired of the lad.

"He was listening to the musicians in the Rapenburg," said Adrian, and releasing himself from the big man's grasp, disappeared in the crowd.

"A bright lad," said the fencing master. "Mine is with the musicians again. The boy can think of nothing but your art. He is much fonder of playing on his comb than combing his hair with it. He is always piping on every leaf and reed, he makes himself triangles from broken rapiers, no kitchen-pot is safe from his drumming; in short, his good-for-nothing head is filled with nothing but sing-song; he wants to be a musician or something of the sort."

"Quite right, quite right!" answered Wilhelm warmly; "he has a fine ear and the best voice in the choir."

"I must consider the matter," answered the captain, "and you, if any one, can tell me what he may accomplish in your art. If you have time this evening, Herr Wilhelm, come to me while I am on guard. I should like to talk with you. To be sure, you will scarcely find me before ten. There's the catch in my throat again, and on such days— By Roland, my fore man!"

The captain cleared his throat loudly and violently, and Wilhelm said: "I am at your service, for the night is long, but I shall not let you go now, until you tell me what you mean by your fore man, Roland."

"Well, then; there is not much to it, and perhaps you won't understand. Come in here. I can tell it better over a tankard of beer, and one's legs rebel when they are denied rest for four nights in succession."

When the two men were seated opposite each

other in the taproom, the fencing-master brushed his mustache away from his lips and began: "How long ago was it?—Let us say a good fifteen years, when I rode to Haarlem with the innkeeper Aquanus, who, as you know, is a learned man and occupies himself with Latin writings and all sorts of ancient rubbish. He is an interesting man to talk with, and when the conversation turned upon how in life we often meet for the first time with things we seem to have met with before, he said that it was easily explained, for the soul was indestructible. As long as we live, it remains with us, and when we die, it soars away to be punished or rewarded according to its deserts, but after centuries, which are no more to the Lord than the moment that I take to empty this mug—one more, Dientje—the merciful Father releases it again, and it seeks an abiding place in some new-born child. This made me laugh; but my friend was not at all disturbed and went on to tell of an old pagan, a wonderfully wise old fellow, who knew for a certainty that his soul had formerly had its habitation in the body of a mighty hero. This same pagan also remembered exactly where, in his previous existence, he had hung his shield, and told his associates. The latter made search and found the shield and upon it the first letters of the Christian and surnames which had been the wise man's centuries before at the time of his existence as a soldier. This took me aback, for look you, master—and don't laugh—something very like it had once happened to me. I don't think much of books and from childhood have always read one and the same. I have inherited it from my father, and it is not printed but written. I will show it to you some time—it contains the history of the brave Roland. Often when I have lost myself in this true and beautiful narrative, my

cheeks have grown as red as fire, and I confess to you as I confessed to Aquanus: I am very much mistaken or I have sat at King Charlemagne's table, and have worn Roland's coat of mail in tourney or battle. I believe I have seen the Moorish king, Marsilia, and once as I was reading how, in the valley of Roncesvalles, the dying Roland kept blowing his horn until all was over, I felt a pain in my throat as though it would burst, and it seemed as though I had felt that very pain before. When I told all this faithfully to Aquanus, he exclaimed that there was no doubt that my soul had once lived in Roland, or in other words, that in a former life I had been the Knight Roland."

The musician looked at his companion in surprise and asked: "You can really believe that, captain?"

"Why not?" answered the other. "Nothing is impossible with God. At first, I myself laughed in the man's face, but his words have followed me, and as I read the old story anew, I could not help asking myself— In short, sir, my soul undoubtedly has once lived in Roland and therefore I call him my 'fore man.' In the course of time it has become my habit to swear by him. Folly, you will think, but I know what I know, and now I must leave you. We will have another talk to-night, but about other matters. Every one has his hobby, but at least mine does not trouble people much. I show it only to good friends; strangers, who ask me about the fore man Roland, rarely do so a second time. The score, Dientje! There is the catch in my throat again. I must see that the towers are properly guarded and caution the sentinels to keep their eyes open. If you come prepared for fighting, you may be spared a walk. There is no telling what may happen to-night. You will probably pass by the

new Rhine. Stop at my house and tell my wife that she need not wait supper for me. Or, no, I will see to it myself; there is something in the air to-day, you will see, for I have the Roncesvalles throat again."

CHAPTER XVII.

In the great guardhouse, which had been built near the citadel during the siege that had been raised two months before, volunteers and city soldiers were sitting together in groups after sundown, drinking copious draughts of beer and whiling away the time in playing cards in the feeble light of tallow candles.

The recess where the officers' table stood was somewhat better lighted. Wilhelm, who in pursuance of his friend's advice had donned his uniform of sub-lieutenant of the burgher guard, seated himself at the empty table shortly after the tower clock had struck ten. As he was ordering the attendant to bring him a mug of beer, Captain Allertssohn appeared with the Jonker van Warmond, who had taken part in the conference at Peter van der Werff's and who, two years before, had valiantly won his captain's sash at the taking of Brill. As this member of one of the richest and most distinguished of the noble families of Holland, whose mother had borne the name of Egmont, entered the recess, he took his hand, encased in a high gauntlet, from the captain's arm and said, countermanding the musician's order:

"Not so! The little keg from the Wurzburger Stein cannot be empty yet. We will find the bottom of it to-night. What think you, captain?"

"It will lighten the keg and not burden us particularly," answered the other. "Good evening,

Herr Wilhelm, punctuality becomes a soldier. The men begin to understand what is coming. I have posted them so that they can scan the country in every direction. I shall have them relieved every hour or so, and look after them myself now and then. This is good liquor, jonker. All honor to the man who exchanges his money for such wine. The first glass to the prince's health."

The three men touched glasses and soon clinked them again to the freedom of Holland, and to the welfare of the good city of Leyden. The talk went on merrily, but duty was not forgotten, for at the end of the first half hour the captain himself rose to scan the horizon and to urge the guards to greater vigilance.

When he returned to the recess, Wilhelm and the jonker did not notice him, in the eagerness of their conversation. The musician was talking of Italy and Allertssohn heard him exclaim with great enthusiasm:

"Any one who has once seen it can never forget it, and when I am sitting on my balcony with my pigeons, my thoughts only too often fly far away with them and my eyes see nothing of our broad, monotonous plains and our gray, cloudy sky."

"Ho, Meister Wilhelm!" interrupted the captain, throwing himself into an armchair and stretching out his booted legs. "Ho, ho! I have found out your hobby now. Italy, always Italy! I know the country myself, for I have been to Brescia, seeking for swords of good steel for the prince and other seigneurs. Then I crossed the rugged Apennines and went to Florence, to look for fine pieces of armor; from Livorno I went by sea to Genoa, and there I bought chased silver and gold work for shoulder belts and sword sheaths. What is true is always true: the brown-skinned rascals can do fine

work. But the country, the country! By Roland, my fore man—how a sensible man can prefer it to ours is more than I can understand."

"Holland is our mother," interrupted the jonker. "As good sons, we think her the best of women, but we can admit without shame that there are others more beautiful in the world."

"So you sing the same tune!" cried the fencing-master, angrily pushing his glass further upon the table. "Have you ever crossed the Alps?"

"No; at the same time——"

"At the same time you believe the color daubers of the artist guild, whose eyes have been caught by a bit of blue in the sky and sea, or the musical gentry who let themselves be carried away by soft voices and sweet music, but you would do well to listen also to a sensible man."

"Speak on, captain."

"Very well; and if any one can catch me in an untruth, I will pay his score until the Day of Judgment. I will begin at the beginning. First you cross the dreadful Alps; there you see snow, dreary, barren rocks, and fierce torrents upon which no one dare launch a boat. Instead of watering the meadows, the whirling stream casts stones along its banks. Then you come to the plains, where many things grow, it is true. I was there in the month of June, and it amused me to see the tiny fields where stood little trees that served to support the the grapevines. It was not so ugly, but the heat, jonker, the heat destroyed all one's pleasure! And the dirt in the taverns, the vermin, and what one had to hear about bravos, who shed the blood of honest Christians in the dark for paltry money! If your throat is dry, there is nothing but warm wine and not a drop of cool beer; and the dust, gentlemen, the dust! All respect to the steel of Brescia.

But in the tavern the very feather was stolen from my hat, and the landlord ate down onions as if they were white bread. May God punish me if ever a bit of honest beef such as my wife sets before me every day—and we do not live like princes—passed between my teeth; and the butter, jonker, the butter! We burn oil in our lamps, and grease the hinges of our doors when they creak, but the Italians use it for cooking chickens and fish. Such accursed doings!"

"Take care, captain," cried Wilhelm, "or I shall take you at your word and you will have to pay my score for the rest of my life. Olive oil is pure, and pleasant to the taste."

"For those who like it. Give me Dutch butter. Olive oil may do for polishing steel, but for cooking, butter is the proper thing, and there's an end of it. Suggest to your mother that she do her cooking in oil—how she would stare at you! But please listen to me further. From Lombardy I went to Bologna and then crossed the Apennines. Sometimes the road went up, then suddenly down again, and it is a curious pleasure, which we are spared in this country, thank God, to sit in the saddle while descending a mountain. To the right and left lofty mountains like walls. You feel oppressed in the narrow valleys, and when you want to look off into the distance—nothing to be seen, for everywhere the miserable mountains rise before your very nose. I believe that the Lord made these mountains after Adam's fall as a punishment for mankind. On the sixth day of the creation the earth was flat. It was in August and when the noon sun was reflected from the rocks, it was enough to kill one; I only wonder that I am not sitting here beside you browned and baked. The famous blue of the Italian sky! Always the same. We have it blue here too, but it changes

with beautiful clouds. There are few things in Holland that please me more than these very clouds of ours. When the Apennines lay behind me at last, I came to world-renowned Florence."

"And can you withhold your admiration from this city as well?" asked the musician.

"No, sir, there are many proud and stately palaces and beautiful churches, and there is no lack of silk and velvet, and the manufacture of cloth is in a flourishing condition; but I was not well, sir, I was not well in Florence, principally on account of the heat, and I found many things different from what I expected. There was the Arno, first of all! The stream was absurd, absolutely absurd. Do you know what it looks like? Like the puddles that stand between the fragments and blocks of hewn stone in a stone-cutter's yard after a heavy rainstorm."

"The score, captain, the score!"

"I mean the yard of the stone-cutter who does a large business, and puddles of considerable size. Will you still contradict me if I declare that the Arno is a narrow, shallow strip of water just good enough to float a boy's toy ship? It borders a wide surface of gray pebbles very much as the gold fringe there borders the top of the jonker's gauntlet."

"You saw it at the end of a hot summer," answered Wilhelm. "In spring it is very different."

"Possibly, but please remember the Rhine and the Maas and our other rivers, even the Marne and the Drecht and whatever the other smaller ones are called. They are full at all times of the year and stately ships can float upon them. In this country things are always the same and can be depended upon; in Italy it is one thing one day and another the next. It is the same in the fencing-school."

"The Italians are dangerous swordsmen," said the jonker.

"Quite true, but they keep constantly on the move and lack the proper steadiness. I know what I am saying, for I took up my quarters with my colleague Torelli, the first fencing-master in the city. Of the meals he set before me I will say nothing. Macaroni to-day, to-morrow macaroni with a couple of drumsticks added, and there you are. I have often drawn my belt tighter after dinner. As far as art goes, Torelli is certainly no bungler, but he also has the same antics in his method. One has to keep one's eyes open in a bout with him, but if I once get to my carte, tierce, and seconde, he is at my mercy."

"A fine series; I have found it useful."

"I know, I know," answered the captain eagerly. "You silenced that French bully at Namur with it. There's the catch in my throat again. Something is going to happen to-day, gentlemen, something is sure to happen."

The fencing-master clutched with his left hand at the front of his ruff and with his right set his glass down violently upon the table. He had often done so far more carelessly, but to-day the glass shattered into pieces.

"That means nothing," cried the jonker. "Here, fellow, another glass for the captain."

The fencing-master pushed his chair back from the table and as he looked at the fragments of greenish glass, said in an altered tone, more to himself than to his companions:

"Yes, yes, grave things will happen to-day. Broken into a thousand pieces! As God wills. I know where my place is."

"Meister," interrupted the jonker in a tone of gentle reproach, as he filled the fresh glass, "Meister, what forebodings are these? Before the battle of Brill, I stumbled as I jumped from the boat and broke my sword. I soon found another,

but I thought to myself: 'It's all over with me to-day.' And here I sit and hope to empty many a glass with you yet."

"I am all right now," said the fencing-master, raising his hat and wiping his forehead with the back of his hand. The hour comes to every man and if mine is approaching—as God wills! My family will not starve. The house on the new Rhine is unencumbered and if I cannot leave them much, I can leave them a good name and true friends. My second lad, the musician, I know you will keep your eye on, Wilhelm. No man is indispensable, and if Heaven calls me from this command, the Jonker von Nordwyk, Jan van der Does, can take my place. You, Herr van Warmond, are exactly where you ought to be, and the good cause will come to a happy issue without me."

The musician listened with astonishment to the softened ring in the deep voice, but the jonker raised his goblet and cried:

"Such weighty thoughts for so fragile a glass! You make too much of the matter, captain. Take up your drinking cup again and pledge me: Long life to the noble art of fencing and to your series—quarte, tierce, and seconde."

"Long life to them!" answered the captain, "long life to them! Many hundreds of noble gentlemen use the sword in this country, and the man who sits here has taught them to use it according to rule. To how many has my series done good service in the duello, and I, Andreas, its master, have let tierce follow quarte and seconde follow tierce a thousand times, but never without the button on the foil and against padded doublets. Outside the city walls, on the battlefield, not one, let me press the leaders as I would, has stood against me in single combat. This sword of Brescian steel

has more than once pierced Spanish jerkin, but the art that I teach, gentlemen, the art that I love and to which I have devoted my life, I have never practiced in earnest. It is hard to bear, gentlemen, and if Heaven, before it calls him, is inclined to grant one favor to a poor man who is no worse than most, it will let me cross my sword with another in single combat and let me try my series in a struggle for life or death with a worthy opponent. If the good Lord will grant this to Andreas——"

The fencing-master had not finished his sentence when an armed man threw open the door and shouted into the guardroom:

"The signal is raised in Leyderdorp."

At these words Allertssohn sprang from his chair as nimbly as a boy, drew himself up to his full height, set his cross-belt straight, pulled down his sash, and cried:

"To the citadel, bugler, and sound the call to arms. Captain van Duivenvoorde, to your volunteers! Place yourself with four companies at the Hohenort Gate, in readiness, should the battle approach the city walls. The gunners must see to the slow-matches. Let the garrisons in the towers be doubled. Go, Klass, to the bellringer of St. Pancratius and tell him to sound the tocsin to warn the people at the fair. Your hand, jonker. I know that you will be at your post, and you, Meister Wilhelm."

"I am going with you," said the musician firmly. "Do not refuse me. I have kept quietly to myself long enough; I shall stifle here."

Wilhelm's cheeks burned and there was such a somber fire in his eyes that the jonker looked with astonishment at his usually composed friend, while the captain exclaimed:

"Place yourself in the first company then, beside

my ensign. You do not look as though you were in a joking mood, and there will be grave doings to-night, grave doings."

Allertsohn went out with a firm step, addressed his men in a few brief and forcible words, ordered the drums to be beaten during the march through the city to rouse the people at the fair, placed himself at the head of his tried little band, and led them toward the new Rhine.

The moon shone down brightly into the silent streets, was reflected in the black surface of the river, and shed a silvery gleam on the pointed gables of the narrow houses. In the silent night the quick tread of the soldiers was echoed loudly back from the houses, and the air shaken by the rolling of the drums made the windowpanes rattle.

This time no happy children ran with paper flags and wooden swords before the soldiers, no merry maidens or proud mothers followed them, nor old men who thought of earlier days when they themselves had carried arms. As the silent troops neared their captain's house, the tower clock struck twelve with solemn strokes, and immediately after the alarm bell began to clash from the tower of Pancratius.

A window was thrown up in the first story of the fencing-master's house and at it appeared the face of the captain's wife. The trials of a married life with the peculiar man had prematurely aged Eva's pretty face, but the soft moonlight transfigured the fading features. The beat of the drums of her husband's troops was familiar to her, and when she saw him marching by at midnight to the grim call of the tocsin, a great terror seized her, and she could scarcely call down: "Husband, husband! What is it, Andreas?"

He did not hear her, for the roll of the drums, the

tread of the soldiers' feet upon the pavement, and the ringing of the alarm bell drowned her voice. But he did not fail to see her and a strange feeling came over him. In the moonlight, her face framed by a white kerchief seemed lovelier to him than it had since the days of his wooing, and he himself felt so full of youthful fire and knightly daring on his way to the field of danger that, with figure drawn up and keeping time to the beat of the drums, he passed below her and with his left hand threw her a lover-like kiss and lowered the sword that he held in his right.

The beating of drums and waving of banners had driven all gloomy thoughts from his mind as they went on to the Gansoort. There stood a cart, the home of itinerant traders, whom the alarm bell had awakened from sleep and who were now hurriedly gathering together their wares. An old woman, amid many lamentations, was harnessing a lean horse to the shafts, and from a little window came the wailing voice of a child crying: "Mother, mother," and then, "Father," and again, "Father."

The fencing-master heard the cry. The smile vanished from his lips and his step grew less elastic. Then he turned about and called loudly to his men, "Forward!" Wilhelm was marching close behind him and approached at a sign from the captain. Allertssohn took the musician's arm and hastening his pace, said in an undertone:

"You will take the boy and teach him?"

"Yes, captain."

"Good; you will be rewarded for it some day," answered the fencing-master, and waving his sword cried: "Freedom to Holland, death to the Spaniard, long life to Orange!"

The soldiers joined in heartily and they marched at a quick pace out through the Hohenort Gate and on toward Leyderdorp.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Adrian hurried home with the bottle, and, in his delight at bringing relief to the sick fräulein, he forgot her headache and let the knocker fall heavily upon the door. Barbara, in consequence, received him with no very kindly words, but he was so full of the pleasure of possessing the dearly won treasure that he fearlessly interrupted his aunt's reproaches:

"You will see; I have something here for the fräulein; where is mother?"

Barbara saw by the boy's face that he was the bearer of some good news that absorbed him completely, and the fresh, happy boyish face was so pleasing that she forgot to scold and said with a good-natured smile:

"You make me quite curious; what are you in such haste about?"

"I have bought something; is mother upstairs?"

"Yes, but show me what you have?"

"A remedy. An unfailing one, I can tell you; a remedy for headache."

"A remedy for headache?" asked the widow in astonishment. "Who palmed that off on you?"

"Palmed it off!" repeated the lad, laughing. "I got it for less than its price."

"Show it me, child," commanded Barbara, reaching for the bottle, but Adrian retreated, hid the bottle behind his back, and said:

"No, aunt; I want to take it to mother myself."

"Was ever such a thing heard of!" cried the widow. "An ass tries to dance on the tight rope and schoolboys dabble in medicines. Show me the thing at once! A quack doctor's wares were the one thing we lacked."

"Quack doctor's wares!" repeated Adrian indignantly. "It cost me all my spending money and it is a good medicine."

During this little passage at arms, Doctor Bontius and the burgomaster's wife had descended the stairs. The doctor had heard the lad's last words and asked sternly:

"Where did you get the stuff?"

He seized the hand of the boy, who dared not resist, took the bottle and the printed prescription from him, and, when Adrian had answered briefly: "From Doctor Morpurgo," went on angrily:

"The stuff is good for throwing away and that's all; but one must take care and not poison the fishes with it; and the thing cost half a gulden! You are a wealthy young man, Meister Adrian! If you have any superfluous capital again, you can lend it to me."

These words destroyed the lad's innocent pleasure, but they did not convince him and he defiantly turned his back halfway upon the doctor. Barbara understood what was passing in his mind and whispered compassionately to the doctor and to her sister-in-law:

"All his spending money to help the fräulein."

The burgomaster's wife at once approached the disappointed child, drew his curly head toward her, and silently kissed his forehead, while the doctor read the printed label and then, gravely as ever and without changing a muscle, said:

"Morpurgo cannot be such a fraud; this medicine may help the fräulein after all."

Adrian had been on the verge of tears. Now he gave a sigh of relief, but he still held fast to Maria's hand as he turned his face toward the doctor again and listened eagerly as the latter continued:

"Two parts marsh trefoil, one part peppermint, and half a part valerian. The last especially for women. Steep in boiling water and drink a cupful cold, morning and night. Not bad—really, not bad. You have found a good remedy here, master colleague. I have something else to say to you, moreover. My boys are going to see the English riders this evening and they would like to have you go with them. You can begin with the draught to-night."

The doctor bowed to the ladies and went toward the door. Barbara followed him into the street and said:

"Were you in earnest in your directions?"

"Certainly, certainly," answered the doctor, "my grandmother often used this remedy for headache and she was a clever woman. Morning and evening, and proper amount of rest."

Henrika occupied a pretty, cheerfully furnished room. The windows overlooked the shady court upon which opened the chamois-leather workshops. She was allowed to sit up part of the day in a cushioned easy-chair. Her strong constitution was rapidly recovering. She was still weak, to be sure, and the headache spoiled whole days and nights. Maria's gentle, considerate manner was soothing to her and she was glad to have beside her Barbara with her fresh face and her simple, thoughtful, helpful ways.

When Maria told her of Adrian's purchase she

was deeply touched, but when the lad was present she concealed her emotion under teasing words and greeted him with:

"Come nearer, my preserver, and give me your hand."

Ever after she called him, "my preserver," or, as she was fond of mingling Italian with her Dutch: "Salvatore," or "Signor Salvatore." Indeed she delighted in having her own names for the people about her, and she called Barbara, whose name she abhorred, "Babetta," and the gentle, lovable, little Elizabeth, whom she was especially fond of having with her "the elf." The burgomaster's wife alone remained "Frau Maria," and when the latter once asked jestingly the reason for such neglect, Henrika answered that her name suited her and that if she had been called "Martha," she would undoubtly have called her "Maria."

The convalescent had had a good day, free from pain, and when, toward evening, Adrian went to see the English riders, and the moonlight and the perfume of the blossoming lindens found their way through the open windows into her room, she asked Barbara not to bring a light and begged Maria to sit down beside her and talk to her.

From Adrian and Lieschen the talk turned upon their own childhood. Henrika had grown up among her father's boon companions, amid the clinking of drinking cups and hunting cries, Maria in a quiet burgher household, and what each told the other seemed like news from a strange world.

"It was easy for you to grow into the tall, white lily that you are," said Henrika; "but I must thank the saints that I am no worse than I am, for we grew up like weeds, and if the love for singing had not been inborn in me, and the chaplain had not been so fine a musician, I might make even a poorer

showing before you. When is the doctor going to let me hear you sing?"

"Next week; but you must not expect too much. Moreover, you have altogether too high an opinion of me. Think of the proverb of the still waters. It is often far less peaceful in the depths than you imagine."

"But you have learned to keep the surface placid in spite of storm; and I have not. A strange peace has come over me here. Whether it is owing to my sickness or to the atmosphere of this house, I cannot say; but how long will it last? My soul used to be like the sea when the hissing waves dash into black abysses, the sea gulls scream, and the fishermen's wives pray on the shore. Now the sea is calm. Do not be too much alarmed if the tempest should begin afresh."

The burgomaster's wife seized the excited girl's hands and said imploringly:

"Be calm, be calm, Henrika. You must think only of getting well now. And shall I confess something to you? I think that hard things are easier to bear if one can throw them off impatiently like the sea of which you speak; with me they pile one on top of another and lie there as though buried under the sand."

"Until the hurricane comes and sweeps it away. I do not wish to prophesy evil, but some day you will remember what I say. What a wild, careless creature I used to be! Then came a day that altered my whole life."

"Was it faithless love that changed it?" asked Maria shyly.

"No, only the wrong done to another by faithless love," answered Henrika with a bitter smile. "When I was a child my inconstant heart beat more quickly, I do not know how often. First, I

felt much more than respect for the one-eyed chaplain, our music-master, and every morning used to place fresh flowers in his window, but he never noticed them. Then—I may have been fifteen—I returned the ardent glances of a handsome page of Graf Brederode. He tried to be tender once, and got a taste of my riding-whip. Then, when I was sixteen, came a handsome young noble who wished to marry me, but he was even more in debt than my father and so was sent home again. I did not shed any tears for him and when, two months later, I saw at a tourney in Brussels Don Fredrique, the son of the great Alva, I thought I loved him as much as ever a damosel loved her Amadis, although I never got any further than seeing him. Then came the storm of which I spoke and with it all love-making was at an end. I will tell you all about it later; there is no need for me to keep it secret, for everybody knows it. Have you ever heard of my sister? No? She was older than I—God never made any one more perfect. And her singing! She was sent to my aunt and there—but I will not excite myself needlessly—to be brief, the man whom she had loved with all the strength of her heart brought misery upon her, and my father cursed her and would not raise a finger to save her. I never knew my mother, but thanks to Anna I never missed her. Anna's fate opened my eyes to men. During these last years many have sought me, but I was wanting in faith and even more in love, for that is all over with me."

"Until it finds its way to you," answered Maria. "It was wrong of me to speak to you about it, for it excites you and does no good."

"Go on; it does do one good to unburden one's heart. Did you never love any one before your husband?"

"Love? No, Henrika, I have never really loved any one but him."

"And your heart waited for the burgomaster before it beat faster?"

"No, it was not always tranquil; I have grown up among men, young and old, and of course I was fonder of some than of others."

"And surely one was dearer than the rest?"

"I do not deny that. At the time of my sister's wedding my brother-in-law brought a friend with him, a young nobleman from Germany, and he remained several weeks with us. I liked him and I still think of him with pleasure."

"Did you never hear from him again?"

"No; and who knows what has become of him? My brother-in-law expected great things of him; and, indeed, he was highly gifted, but at the same time he was reckless and foolhardy and must have cost his mother many an anxious hour."

"You must tell me more about him."

"What good will it do, Henrika?"

"I don't want to talk any more, but I should like to lie still and breathe in the scent of the lindens and listen, only listen."

"No, you must go to bed now. I will help you and when you have been alone for an hour, I will come back.

"One learns obedience with you; but when my preserver comes back, bring him here. He shall tell me about the English riders. There comes Frau Babetta with his drink. You will see that I take it punctually."

The boy was late in coming home, for he had enjoyed all the delights of the fair with the doctor's sons. The visit that he was allowed to make Henrika was cut short. His father he had not seen at all, for he had gone to a night meeting at Van Bronkhorst's.

The next morning the holidays would be over, school would begin again, and Adrian had intended to finish his school tasks that evening. But the English riders had interfered and he could not possibly appear before the rector without his exercise. He admitted this frankly to his mother, and she made a place for him at the table at which she was sewing, and helped the young Latin student with many words and rules that she had learned from her dead brother.

When there lacked but half an hour of midnight, Barbara entered the room, saying:

"That's enough for to-night; there will be time to finish to-morrow morning before school."

Without waiting for Maria's answer, she closed the lad's books and began to collect them.

As she was doing so the room was shaken by a violent knocking at the house-door. Maria threw aside her sewing and started from her seat, while Barbara cried:

"In the name of Heaven what is the matter?"

Adrian ran hastily into his father's room and opened the window.

The ladies hurried after him, and before they could question the intruder a deep voice called up to them:

"Open; I must come in."

"What is the matter?" asked Barbara, who could see in the moonlight that it was a soldier. "One can't hear one's own voice. Stop that knocking."

"Call the burgomaster," cried the messenger, who had been knocking without cessation. "Quick, woman, the Spaniards are coming."

Barbara screamed and clasped her hands. Maria grew pale, but she did not lose her self-control and answered:

"The burgomaster is not at home, but I will send for him. Quick, Adrian; go and call your father."

The boy dashed down the stairs, and in the hall met the serving-man and Trautchen. The old woman, who had jumped hastily from her bed, had wrapped a petticoat about her, and was endeavoring with trembling hands to unfasten the door. The man-servant thrust her aside, and as soon as the door swung back on its hinges Adrian darted out and ran as for a wager down the street to Van Bronkhorst's house. He reached there before any other messenger, pushed through the open door into the dining-room, and cried breathlessly to the men sitting in consultation over their wine:

"The Spaniards are here!"

The gentlemen started from their seats. Some wished to hasten to the citadel, others to the Rathhaus, and in the excitement of the moment no sensible decision could be arrived at. Peter van der Werff had alone retained his composure, and when Allertssohn's messenger appeared and informed him that the captain with his men was on on the way to Leyderdorp, the burgomaster pointed out that the authorities' entire attention should be devoted to the safety of the people at the fair. He and Van Hout undertook to see to them, and Adrian was soon standing with his father amid the assembling people who had been roused from their sleep by the brazen voice of the alarm bell from the tower of Pancratius.

CHAPTER XIX.

Adrian's activity for the night was not yet over, for his father did not prevent his following him to the Rathhaus. There he commissioned the lad to tell his mother that he would be busy till morning, and that the man-servant should direct all persons who wished to see him after one o'clock to the Holzmarkt on the Rhine. Maria sent the boy back to the Rathhaus to ask his father if he did not want his coat or something to eat.

The lad executed these commissions with great alacrity, for as he pushed his way through the crowds that thronged the narrow streets, he felt more important than he ever had before; he had a duty to discharge and that at night, the bedtime of other boys and especially of his companions, who certainly were not allowed out of the house at this hour. In addition, he might look forward to stirring times, full of the beating of drums, blaring of trumpets, rattle of musketry, and thunder of cannon. It seemed to him as though the boyish game "Holland against Spain" was about to be continued in earnest and on a large scale.

The full enjoyment of life peculiar to his years took possession of him, and when he had elbowed his way to less frequented streets, he sped away and shouted into the night as cheerfully as though he had some good tidings to proclaim: "They are coming!" "The Spaniards!" or "*Hannibal ante portas!*"

When he learned upon his return to the Rathhaus that his father needed nothing and that if he required anything he would send a constable, he considered that his duties were at an end and that he was at liberty to satisfy his own curiosity.

He went first to the English riders. The tent in which they had given their performance had vanished from the earth and shouting men and women were folding together huge rolls of canvas, fastening bales, and harnessing horses amid a shower of oaths. The lurid glare of torches mingled with the light of the moon and showed him, on the narrow steps that led to a large house on wheels, a little girl in shabby burgher dress, crying bitterly. Could that be the rose-colored angel who had seemed like a happy being from another world as she hovered above the back of a milk-white steed? Then a shrieking old woman lifted the child into the van and he followed the moving crowd and saw mounted on a lean nag Doctor Morpurgo, no longer in scarlet but in sober cloth, riding beside his cart. The negro angrily urged on the mule attached to the vehicle, but his master seemed to have remained in possession of his usual calm. His wares were of little value and the Spaniards had no cause for depriving him of his head, or his tongue, with which he earned more than he needed.

Adrian followed him to the long row of booths in the wide street and there he saw things that subdued his high spirits and made him realize more and more that grave and heartrending events were passing. He could still have laughed as he watched the gingerbread bakers and yarn dealers who had come to blows, because, in their first alarm, they had tossed their wares promiscuously into each other's boxes and were now unable to separate their belongings; but he was heartily sorry for the

vendor of Delft earthenware, for a wagon from Gouda, loaded with huge bales, had knocked down her frail stand and she was standing wringing her hands over her broken wares, with which she earned a living for herself and her children, while the driver, without heeding her, urged on his horses with resounding blows of the whip. A little girl, who had become separated from her parents and was being led away by a compassionate burgher's wife, filled the air with her cries. A poor rope-dancer, from whom a thief had stolen the little tin box that contained the pennies he had scraped together, was running about wringing his hands and seeking the watchman. A cobbler was cramming riding-boots and ladies' slippers pellmell into a wooden case with handles of hemp, while his wife, instead of helping him, tore her hair and screamed: "I told you so, you fool, you dolt, you blockhead! They are coming and will take everything away from us."

At the entrance to the street that led past the Assendelft house to the Liebfrauenbrücke, several laden vans had become entangled, and, in their terror, the drivers, instead of getting down and procuring help, began to belabor each other, and in doing so struck the women and children who were seated among the bales. Their screams and shrieks could be heard afar off, but even they were drowned; for at the north end a dancing bear had gotten loose and put to flight all who were near him. Shrieking and yelling, the terrified people came rushing down the street, carrying with them others who knew nothing of the cause of their alarm, and led astray by the danger that lay nearest, screamed: "The Spaniards! The Spaniards!" Whatever stood in the way of the panic-stricken mob was overthrown. The child of a sieve-dealer was

knocked down under the feet of the crowd, beside his father's overturned cart, close to Adrian, who had retreated into a doorway. But the lad was unable to spring to the child's assistance, as he was firmly wedged into his place of refuge, and his attention was attracted in another direction by the appearance of Janus Dousa mounted on horseback. He was riding toward the terror-stricken mob. Above the cries of, "The Spaniards! The Spaniards!" rose his penetrating voice: "Peace, peace, my friends! The enemy has not yet come! To the Rhine, to the Rhine! There are ships there, awaiting all strangers. To the Rhine! There are no Spaniards here, I tell you, no Spaniards!"

The jonker pulled up close to Adrian, for his horse could advance no further and was snorting and trembling under his rider. The nobleman's exhortation bore little fruit and it was not until hundreds had rushed past him that the number of affrighted fugitives grew less. The bear before which they had fled had long since been captured by brewers' men and led back to his owner. The city constables now appeared under the burgomaster's command and the boy followed them unnoticed to the Holzmarkt on the south bank of the Rhine. There they were met by another crowd, for many traders had hastened hither to place their goods in the ships. Men and women were pressing over bales and merchandise that were being rolled down narrow gangplanks into the ships. A woman, a child, and a rope-maker's cart had been pushed into the water, and it was at this point that the wildest confusion prevailed. But the burgomaster arrived at the right moment, directed the rescue of the drowning woman and child, and set about bringing order out of chaos. The constables

were ordered to let the fugitives board only those ships that were bound for the places to which they belonged ; from each ship two planks were put out, one for passengers and one for merchandise ; the messengers of the council proclaimed that—as the law directed whenever the tocsin sounded—all burghers were to enter their houses and the streets to be cleared, under pain of a heavy penalty. All the gates were thrown open for the passage of vehicles, exit being alone prohibited from the Hohenort Gate, which led to Leyderdorp. Thus the streets were cleared, order was restored among the crowd, and when Adrian returned at dawn to his home, there was little more stir in the streets than on ordinary nights.

His mother and Barbara had been anxious about him, but he told them about his father and in what way he had seen him put a stop to the tumult.

As he was speaking musket shots could be heard in the distance and these filled him with such excitement that he wanted to go out again ; but his mother restrained him and he had to resign himself to going to his room. He did not go to bed, however, but climbed to the upper loft in the gable at the back of the house and looked out from the window, through which the bales of leather were hoisted, toward the east, from whence muskets shots were still to be heard. He could see nothing but the flush of dawn and fleecy clouds of smoke that curled upward, tinged with pink. As nothing else appeared, his eyelids closed and he fell asleep by the open window and dreamed of a bloody fight and of the English riders.

His sleep was so deep that he did not hear the rumble of wheels that sounded from the quiet courtyard beneath. The carts from which the sound proceeded belonged to merchants from neighboring

towns who preferred to leave their wares in the threatened city to carrying them toward the approaching Spaniards. Meister Peter had given permission to some of these to leave their goods with him. The wagons had to pass through the rear buildings where the workshops were, and such wares as might be injured by the weather were to be carried in the course of the day into the spacious garret of his house.

The burgomaster's wife had gone to Henrika's room at midnight in order to quiet her, but the convalescent betrayed no uneasiness, and when she learned that the Spaniards were advancing her eyes lighted up joyously. Maria saw it and turned away from her guest; but she kept back the sharp words that rose to her lips, wished Henrika good-night, and left the room.

Henrika looked after her thoughtfully and raised herself in bed, for there could be no further thought of sleep that night. The ringing from the tower of Pancratius never ceased and more than once there was the sound of voices and of opening doors and of distant firing. Many noises, the cause and nature of which she could not determine, reached her ears, and as morning dawned the usually silent courtyard under her window grew animated.

There was the rattling of wagons and confused shouting. A deep, masculine voice seemed to be directing what was going on below. Her curiosity and uneasiness increased from minute to minute. She listened with such strained attention that her head began to ache again, but she could hear only occasional words and then indistinctly. Had the city been delivered to the Spaniards? Had the soldiers of King Philip taken up their quarters in the burgomaster's house? Her blood rose angrily as she thought of the triumph of the Castilians and the

humiliation of her country, but she was soon filled with the joyous emotion she had first felt, for she saw art re-entering the bare, despoiled churches of Leyden, chanting processions moving through the streets, and holy mass being celebrated by priests in rich vestments in the freshly adorned churches, to the accompaniment of sweet singing, the tinkling of bells, and the odor of incense. She expected to recover at the Spaniards' hands a place where she could pray in her own way and unburden her soul by confession. In her former surroundings her religion had been her one consolation. A worthy priest had been her teacher and had earnestly striven to make her see that the new faith threatened to destroy the mystical sacredness of life, the longing for the beautiful, every ideal emotion of the human soul, and with them all art, and therefore Henrika preferred to see her country Spanish and Catholic rather than free from the foreigners whom she hated, and Calvanistic.

Gradually it grew quieter in the courtyard but when the first rays of the morning sun touched her window, the stir began anew. Heavy footsteps sounded on the pavement, and among the voices that mingled with those she had heard before she recognized Maria's and Barbara's. Yes, she was not mistaken. That cry of horror could come only from the lips of her friend, and it was followed by exclamations of sorrow from bearded lips, and loud sobbing. Bad news must have come to the house of her hosts, and the woman who was weeping so bitterly must be good "Babetta."

She could no longer stay in bed. On the table near by, amid bottles and glasses, near the candle and tinder box, stood the little bell, at the slightest sound of which one of her nurses invariably appeared. Henrika rang it twice, then again and again, but no

one came. Finally, impelled partly by impatience and vexation, partly by curiosity and sympathy, she slipped into her shoes and her morning gown, crossed to the chair that stood on the platform in the recess, pushed up the window, and looked down at the group immediately below her.

No one noticed her, for the men who stood sorrowfully around, and the tearful women, Maria and Barbara among them, listened with every sign of sympathy to the eager recital of a young man and had eyes and ears for no one but him. Henrika recognized in the speaker the musician, Wilhelm, but only by his voice, for the helmet on his head and the blood-stained coat of mail gave a warlike, indeed an heroic air to the unpretentious musician.

He was already well along in his story when Henrika became an unseen listener.

"Yes, sir," he replied in answer to a question from the burgomaster, "we followed them, but they disappeared into the village again and all remained quiet. It would have been madness to attempt to storm the houses. So we kept quiet, but about two o'clock we heard firing in the neighborhood of Leyderdorp. 'The Jonker van Warmond must have made a sally,' said the captain, and led us in the direction of the firing. This was what the Spaniards wanted, for long before we reached our destination, a company of Castilians with white tunics over their armor rose out of a ditch, flung themselves on their knees, muttered a paternoster, shouted their 'Santiago,' and bore down upon us. We had seen them in time and the halberdiers were able to set their pikes, and the musketeers to kneel down and lay the slow-match to the powder. So we gave the Spaniards a warm reception and four of them fell in the charge. We were superior to them in numbers, and their captain led them back to the ditch in good

order. There they remained, for their purpose was undoubtedly none other than to delay us and then let us be cut off by a larger body. We were too weak to drive them from their position, but when morning began to dawn and still they would not come out, our captain advanced toward them with a white flag and a drummer, and shouted to them in Italian that he wished their lordships a good morning and that if they had among them an officer with a spark of honor in his body, to let him come out and place himself before a captain who wished to cross swords with him. He gave him his word that his men would look on impassively at the duel, no matter what the result might be. At this moment two shots were fired from the ditch and the balls came very near hitting the poor captain. We called to him to think of his own life, but he did not move and shouted to them that they were cowards and assassins like their king.

"In the meantime it had grown comparatively light—we heard the sound of arguing in the ditch and just as Allertssohn was about to turn away, an officer sprang out and cried: 'Stand, braggart, and draw.' The captain drew his Brescian sword, bowed to his opponent as though they were in the fencing-room, bent his steel, and measured it with the Castilian's. He was a thin man of imposing height and distinguished bearing, and, as was soon shown, a dangerous swordsman. He circled around the captain like a whirlwind, dodging, thrusting, feinting, but Allertssohn kept his head and confined himself at first to skillful parries. Then he got in a beautiful carte, and, as the other parried it, he followed with a tierce, and, this being warded off, quick as lightning with a seconde as he alone could give. The Castilian fell on his knees, for the sword had pierced his lung. In a short time he was dead.

As soon as he lay stretched upon the grass, the Spaniards fell upon us anew, but we drove them back again and took the officer's body into our midst. I have never seen the captain so proud and happy as he was then. You, Jonker van Warmond, can readily guess the reason. He had done honor to his series in a real duel with an opponent who was his equal, and he said to me that this was the happiest morning he had ever known. Then he gave orders to make a circuit of the ditch and attack the enemy on the flank. But hardly had we begun to advance, when the expected troops pressed forward from Leyderdorp. Their cry of 'Santiago' echoed far and wide and at the same time our old enemies came out from the ditch and attacked us. Allertssohn rushed forward, but he did not reach them. Ah, gentlemen, I shall never forget it—a ball struck him down at my side. It must have penetrated his heart, for all he said was: 'Remember the lad!' then his mighty frame stiffened and he was dead. We wanted to take his body with us, but the numbers pressed too heavily upon us, and it was all we could do to come in tolerable order within range of the jonker's volunteers. The Spaniards dared not venture so far. Here we are. The Castilian's body lies in the tower at the Hohenort Gate. Here are the papers that we found in the dead man's doublet, and this is his ring; his escutcheon is a noble one."

Peter van der Werff took the dead man's wallet, turned the papers over, and said: "Don Louis d' Avila was his name."

He said no more, for his wife had caught sight of Henrika's head stretched far out of the window and exclaimed in a startled voice: "Fräulein, in Heaven's name, fräulein—what are you doing?"

CHAPTER XX.

The burgomaster's wife had been alarmed about Henrika, but the latter received her with unusual animation and met her gentle reproaches with the assurance that the morning had done her good. Fate was just, she said, and if it were true that confidence in recovery aided the doctors, Doctor Bontius would have an easy time with her. The fallen Castilian could be none other than the wretch who had plunged her sister into misery. Maria, amazed but completely reassured, left her and went in search of her husband to tell him how she had found the invalid and the relation in which the Spanish officer killed by Allertssohn seemed to have stood to Henrika and her sister. Peter listened with divided attention, and when Barbara brought him a freshly ironed ruff, he interrupted his wife in the midst of her story and handed her the dead man's wallet, saying:

"There, let her convince herself, and bring it back to me to-night. I shall hardly be home to dinner; during the day you will go and see poor Allertssohn's widow."

"Yes, indeed," she answered readily. "And whom will you put in his place?"

"The prince must decide that."

"Have you thought of means of keeping communication open with Delft?"

"You are thinking of your mother?"

"Not that alone. Rotterdam also lies to the

south. From Haarlem and Amsterdam, that is, the north, we can expect nothing, for everything there is in the hands of the Spaniards."

"I shall make a place for you in the council of war. Where do you get all your wisdom?"

"I have my own thoughts, and is it not natural that I would rather follow you into the future with my eyes open than blindly? Have you made use of the English regiment to strengthen the works on the old canal? Kaak, too, is an important point."

Peter looked at his wife in amazement, and he was seized by that uncomfortable feeling that takes possession of an inexperienced writer when some one looks unbidden over his shoulder. She had pointed out a grave error, which might have serious consequences, for which, indeed, he was not alone responsible; but, as he did not wish to excuse himself to her, and, perhaps, succeed ill in his justification, he made no reply other than: "Those are men's affairs! Good-by until to-night." Then he walked past Barbara toward the door.

Maria did not know how it happened, but before he laid his hand on the latch she had controlled herself sufficiently to call after him:

"You are going like this, Peter! Is it right? What did you promise me on your return from the prince?"

"I know, I know," he answered impatiently. "One cannot serve two masters, and in these times I beg of you not to trouble me with questions and things that don't concern you. It is for me to direct the affairs of the city. You have your invalid guest, the children, the poor. Let that be enough."

Without waiting for her answer, he left the room, while she stood motionless, staring after him.

Barbara watched her for several moments; then

pretending to busy herself with the papers on her brother's desk, she said, as though to herself, but half turned toward Maria:

"These are bad times. Any one who is not oppressed by such cares as Peter is may thank the Lord. He has to bear the responsibility of everything, and even those who are nimble of foot cannot dance with hundred-pound weights on their legs. No one has a better heart, and no one means more honestly than he. How the traders at the fair praised his prudence! In times of storm, people recognize the pilot. And Peter was always greatest when things were at their worst. He knows what he is undertaking, but the last weeks have aged him years. We must overlook many things in him, it seems to me."

Maria nodded, and Barbara left the room. When she returned, a few moments later, she said imploringly:

"You look badly, child; come and lie down. An hour's sleep is better than three meals. Such a wakeful night as the last does not pass without leaving some trace. The sun was shining so brightly that I have drawn down the curtains. And I have gotten your bed ready. Be sensible, and come."

As she spoke, she took Maria by the hand and led her away. Maria did not resist, and although her eyes did not remain dry when she was alone, she was soon overcome by sleep.

Toward noon, refreshed and newly dressed, she betook herself to the captain's house. Eva Peterstochter, the fencing-master's widow, a quiet, modest woman, whom she scarcely knew by sight, was not to be seen. She was sitting alone in her room, weeping; but Maria found in the house the musician, Wilhelm, who was talking comfortingly to his dead friend's son, and had promised to take charge of him and make him a famous musician.

The burgomaster's wife left word that she hoped that the widow would receive her on the following day, and then went out with the musician. Everywhere groups of burghers, journeymen, and women were standing, discussing what had happened and the evil that was to come. While Maria was telling the musician who the fallen Spaniard was, and that Henrika wished to speak to him as soon as possible, she was interrupted more than once; now companies of volunteers or burgher guards marched past on their way to relieve the watch on the towers and walls; now a cannon blocked the way. Was it the anticipation of coming events, or was it the roll of the drums and the blasts of trumpet that agitated her escort so greatly that he often raised his hand to his forehead, and she was obliged to ask him to slacken his pace. There was an unusual, suppressed tone in his voice as, in obedience to her request, he told her that the Spaniards had come by ship up the Amstel, the Drecht, and the Braasem Sea to the Rhine, and had landed at Leyderdorp.

He was interrupted by a mounted messenger, wearing the prince's colors, and followed not only by children, but by grown men, who were trying to reach the Rathhaus at the same time as the messenger; and as soon as the crowd had passed, the burgomaster's wife put question after question to her companion. The sounds of war, the distant firing, the bright uniforms that were everywhere to be seen in the place of the sober burgher dress, filled her too with lively suspense, and what she heard from Wilhelm was not calculated to lessen it. The main body of the Spanish troops was on the way to the Hague. The investing of the city had already begun, but the enemy would scarcely succeed in his object, for the English allies who were to defend the new fortifications of Valkenburg, the

village of Alfen, and the Gouda Lock, were to be relied upon. Wilhelm had himself seen the British soldiers, their commander, Colonel Chester, and Captain Gensforth, and praised their fine equipments and military bearing.

The burgomaster's wife was about to take leave of her companion at the door of her house, when Wilhelm urgently begged to be allowed to speak with the fräulein at once, and it was with difficulty that she convinced him that he must be patient until the doctor had given his consent.

At dinner, Adrian, who was always talkative enough when his father was not present, related all the things he had seen, as well as the news and rumors that he had gathered at school and on the streets, and his loquacity was not a little encouraged by his mother's eager questions.

A great uneasiness had taken possession of the burgomaster's wife. Her enthusiasm for the cause of liberty, to which her dearest had fallen victims, blazed up brightly, and hatred of the oppressors of her country stirred passionately in her breast. The gentle, retiring young wife, who under ordinary circumstances, was incapable of any harsh or loud expression of feeling, would now have hastened with the men to the ramparts, there, like Kenau Hasselaer of Haarlem, to fight against the foe.

Wounded pride and everything that had oppressed her heart an hour before gave place to sympathy for her country's cause. Filled with new energy, she went to Henrika, and when evening came on, seated herself by the lamp to write to her mother, which she had neglected to do since the sick girl's arrival, and communication with Delft might soon be cut off.

When she read her letter over, she was satisfied with it and herself, for it breathed firm belief in the

triumph of the good cause and expressed plainly and unconstrainedly how glad and ready she was to endure the worst.

Barbara had already gone to bed when Peter finally appeared. He was so exhausted that he scarcely touched the food that had been kept for him. As he ate, he confirmed what Maria had already heard from the musician, and was gentle and kind in his manner, but she was pained by his appearance, for it reminded her of Barbara's allusion to the heavy burden he had taken upon himself. She noticed to-day, for the first time, two deep lines that trouble had graven from eyes to mouth, and seized with compassion, she stepped behind him, laid a hand on each cheek, and kissed him on the forehead. He trembled slightly, and, seizing her right hand so passionately that she started back, raised it first to his lips and then to his eyes and kept it there for several moments.

At last he rose, and bidding her an affectionate good-night, went into the bedroom and lay down to rest. When she herself sought her bed he was breathing heavily. Extreme fatigue had soon overcome him. Little sleep came to either that night, and, whenever she awoke, she heard him sighing and moaning. She lay motionless so as not to disturb his much-needed rest, and twice she held her breath, for he was talking to himself. First he moaned softly: "Hard, too hard," and then, "If I can only bear it!"

When she awoke the next morning, he had already gone to the Rathhaus. He returned at noon and told her that the Spaniards had taken the Hague and had been welcomed with acclamations by the pitiful adherents of the king. The burghers that were faithful to the cause and the "Beggars" had fortunately had time to escape to Delft, for the

valiant Nikolas Ruichhaver had held the enemy in check for a time at the Geestburg. The west was still open and the newly fortified stronghold of Valkenburg, garrisoned by the English, was not easy to storm. To the east, at Alfen, still other British allies lay in the Spaniards' rear.

The burgomaster told all this unasked, but not as freely and naturally as in talking with men. As he spoke, he often glanced down at his plate and stopped hesitatingly. It seemed as though he were obliged to place a certain constraint upon himself, in order to speak before the women, servants and children of matters that he was accustomed to discuss only with men. Maria listened attentively but she kept discreetly silent, encouraging him only by affectionate glances and exclamations of sympathy, while Barbara boldly asked question after question.

The meal was drawing to an end, when the Jonker van Warmond entered the room unannounced and begged the burgomaster to accompany him at once, for Colonel Chester was at the White Gate with part of his troops and was asking admittance into the city.

At this news, Peter dashed his beer mug angrily upon the table, started up, and left the room in advance of the nobleman.

Late in the afternoon, the Van der Werff house began to fill. The gossips came to talk over with Frau Barbara what was passing at the White Gate. The wife of Burgomaster van Swieten had learned from her husband himself that the English without offering any resistance had abandoned the fine, new fort of Valkenburg and had taken to their heels at the mere sight of the Spaniards. The enemy had advanced from Haarlem across the dunes, by Nordwyk, and it would have been an easy matter for the Britons to hold so strong a position.

"Fine aid such allies give!" cried Barbara hotly. "Queen Elizabeth has kept the men for herself and has sent us the women."

"And yet they are true sons of Anak and bear themselves like smart soldiers," said the wife of Alderman Heemskerk. "High boots, doublets of fine leather, gay plumes in their helmets and hats, heavy coats of mail, halberds that would kill half a dozen—and all like new."

"They probably did not want to spoil them and that is why they sought a place of safety so quickly, the cowardly braggarts," cried the wife of Churchwarden de Haes, who was renowned for her sharp tongue. "You seem to have inspected them closely, Frau Margret."

"From the wind-mill at the gate," answered the other. "The officer with the flag of truce stopped on the bridge right below us—a handsome man on a fine horse. His trumpeter was also mounted and the large square of velvet on his trumpet was stiff with fine embroidery in gold and pearls. They pleaded well, but the gate remained closed."

"Right, right!" cried Frau Heemskerk. "I don't like the prince's commissioner, Van Bronkhorst. What does he care about us as long as the queen keeps in a good humor and continues the subsidies? He wishes to conciliate Chester and grant him admission, so I have heard."

"So he may," added Frau van Hout, "but your husband, Frau Maria, and mine—I spoke with him on the way here—are doing all in their power to prevent it. The two Seigneurs van der Does side with them, and so the commissioner may be overruled."

"God grant he may be," cried the harsh voice of Wilhelm's mother. "To-morrow or next day, not a cat will be able to pass the gates, and my husband

says that we must begin to be sparing of the provisions."

"Five hundred more mouths in the city to lessen our children's portions! That would be a fine thing!" cried Frau de Haes, throwing herself back in her chair so that it creaked, and beating her knees with her hands.

"And they are Englishmen, my dear, Englishmen," Frau Cornelius interrupted Frau Margret. "They don't eat, they devour. We can provide for our own men, but Herr von Nordwyk—the younger, I mean, who was sent by the prince as emissary to the queen—told my Wilhelm what a British glutton can do. They eat up your beef like cheese, and our beer is dish-water in comparison with their black brew."

"One could put up with that," answered Barbara, "if they were brave fighters. A hundred head of cattle more or less cannot hurt us, and a glutton turns temperate when he's put on short rations. But I wouldn't kill one of Adrian's gray rabbits for these renegades."

"It would be a pity," said Frau de Haes. "I am going home now and when I see my husband he shall hear what sensible people think of these Englishmen."

"Gently, friend, gently," said Burgomaster van Swieten's wife, who had until now been playing silently with the cat. "Believe me, it will not matter in the end whether we let in the allies or not, for before the gooseberries in our gardens are ripe, all resistance will be over."

At these words, Maria, who was passing cakes and mulled wine, placed the tray upon the table and asked:

"Is that your wish, Frau Magtelt?"

"It is my wish," she answered steadily, "and the

wish of many sensible people also. Resistance is impossible against superior numbers and the sooner we appeal to the king's clemency, the more surely it will be granted."

The other women listened speechlessly to Frau van Swieten, but Maria went closer to her and said indignantly:

"Any one who says that had better go at once to the Spaniards; any one who says that wishes disgrace to the city and to the country; any one who says that——"

Frau Magtelt interrupted Maria with a forced laugh and cried:

"Are you trying to instruct experienced women, Madam Precocity? Is it usual to attack a visitor in such a way?"

"Usual or not," answered the other, "I will never allow such words in my house, and if they came from the lips of my own sister, I would say: 'You are no longer a friend of mine—go!'"

Maria's voice trembled and she pointed toward the door with outstretched arm.

Frau Magtelt struggled for composure, but as she left the room, she could find no other words than: "Never fear—never fear—you shall never see me again."

Barbara followed the outraged woman and while the others sat looking down at the floor in embarrassment, Wilhelm's mother cried:

"Well done, little woman, well done!"

Kindly Frau van Hout put her arm about Maria, kissed her on the forehead, and whispered:

"Turn away from the others and dry your eyes."

CHAPTER XXI.

We are told of a condemned man who was thrown by his cruel jailers into a cage of ingenious construction. Day by day the walls of this cage grew narrower and narrower, day by day they pressed more closely upon the miserable man, until the dungeon became his tomb. Thus, from hour to hour, the iron barriers of the Spanish regiments drew nearer and nearer together around Leyden, and if they succeeded in overcoming the resistance of their victim, the latter was threatened with an even more cruel and pitiless end than that of the unfortunate prisoner. The circle that Valdez, King Philip's commander, and his able lieutenant, Don Ayala, had drawn about the city in scarce two days, was almost complete, the carefully strengthened fortifications of Valkenburg were in the hands of the enemy and consequently the danger was drawing on more rapidly and with far more irresistible force than even the most timid among the inhabitants had feared. If Leyden fell, its houses would be given over to fire and pillage, its men to death, its women to shame. The fate of other conquered cities and the Spanish nature gave ample assurance of this.

Who could help picturing the guardian angel of the busy city other than with gloomy brow and anxious eyes? and yet at the White Gate at noon this day, there was as gay and brilliant a scene as though a spring festival were being concluded with

a glittering spectacle. Every available place on the walls as far as the Katharinen Tower was occupied by men, women, and children. The old wall looked like a crowded row in an amphitheater, and far into the city could be heard the hum of the curious throng.

It is kind of fate to enable men to enjoy a brief moment of sunshine in the midst of a terrible storm, and thus the journeymen and apprentices, the women and children on the walls, forgot the impending danger and feasted their eyes on the gorgeously clad English warriors who stared up at them and laughed and nodded boldly at the young girls, though some awaited with grave faces the result of the negotiations that were being held within the walls.

At last the portals of the White Gate were thrown open. Commissioner van Bronkhorst, Van der Werff, Van Hout, and other leaders of the community escorted the British colonel and his trumpeter to the bridge. The colonel seemed filled with passionate indignation, and more than once struck his hand upon the hilt of his sword; the Leyden authorities were expostulating with him and finally took leave of him with profound salutations, which he answered only with a haughty wave of the hand. Then the burghers returned, the gates clashed together, the old lock creaked, the iron-bound crossbars fell into their places, the rattle of the drawbridge chains was distinctly audible, and then the assembled multitude knew that the Englishmen had been refused admittance into the city.

Loud cheers intermingled with lively expressions of disapproval were heard. "Long live Orange!" shouted the boys, among whom were Adrian and the son of the dead fencing-master; the women

waved their handkerchiefs, and all eyes were turned upon the British. A loud fanfare sounded, the mounted officers spurred toward the colonel and held with him a brief and stormy council of war, and shortly after there came the sound of trumpet calls. There was a scurrying among the soldiers and many of them shook their fists at the city. The stacked muskets and halberds were seized by their owners, and amid the roll of drums and blare of trumpets order was gradually evolved out of the confusion. Individuals formed into files, files into companies, the gay standards were unfurled, and with loud huzzas the corps marched along the Rhine to the southwest, where lay the Spanish outposts.

The Leyden lads joined lustily in the Englishmen's cheers.

Even Andreas, Captain Allertssohn's son, had begun to join in the shouts; but when he saw a tall captain marching proudly at the head of his company his voice failed and with his hands to his eyes he ran homeward to his mother.

The other lads did not notice him, for the setting sun was so dazzlingly reflected on the helmets and coats of mail, the halberds and the swords of the soldiers, the fanfares echoed so inspiringly, the officers' steeds pranced so spiritedly under their riders, the bright plumes and banners and the smoke from the glowing matches took on such brilliant coloring in the rosy glow of the departing sun, that every eye hung spellbound on the spectacle. Then a new occurrence attracted the attention of old and young.

Six-and-thirty Englishmen, and among them several officers, remained behind the rest and approached the gate. Once more the lock creaked and the chains rattled. The little band was admitted into the city and made welcome by Herr van Bronkhorst and the burgomaster.

Every one on the walls had supposed that a skirmish would take place between the retreating Britons and the Spaniards. But how mistaken they had been! For before the vanguard had reached the enemy slow-matches were seen flying into the air, banners lowered, and when night came on and the curious dispersed, they knew that the Englishmen had deserted the good cause and gone over to the Spaniards.

The six-and-thirty, who had been admitted within the gates, were the only ones who had refused to be accessories to this treason.

The task of providing quarters for Captain Cromwell and the other Englishmen and Netherlanders who had remained faithful, was allotted to Van Hout. Van der Werff went home with Herr van Bronkhorst. Many low but vehement words were exchanged between them. The commissioner protested that the prince would be enraged at the refusal to admit the Englishmen, for he rightly placed great weight upon Queen Elizabeth's countenance of the cause of freedom, to which the burgomaster and his friends had done ill service that day. Van der Werff denied this, for everything depended upon holding Leyden. If Leyden fell Delft, Gouda, and Rotterdam were also lost, and all further attempts to win freedom for Holland would be fruitless. Five hundred more mouths to feed would prematurely exhaust the already insufficient supplies. All had been done to give as mild a form as possible to the refusal to admit the Englishmen; indeed, they had been given leave to encamp under the cannon of the city, in the shelter of the walls.

When the two men separated, neither had persuaded the other, but each was convinced of his comrade's sincerity.

In parting, Peter said:

"The clerk of the council shall explain the reasons for our conduct to the prince in a clear and convincing letter, as only he can write, and his excellency will certainly accept them in the end. You may depend upon it."

"We shall see," answered the commissioner, "but remember that we shall soon be shut up within these walls, like criminals under lock and key, and that, perhaps, even by day after to-morrow, no messenger can find a way to him."

"The clerk of the council is rapid with his pen."

"And early to-morrow morning let it be proclaimed that we counsel the women, old men, and children, in short, all who diminish the supplies, and are useless in defending the city, to leave the town. They can reach Delft in safety, for the way thither is still open."

"Very well," answered Peter. "Indeed, many women have already gone."

"It is well," cried the commissioner. "We are drifting in a frail bark on the high sea. Had I a daughter, I know well what I should do. *Auf wiedersehen*, meister. How can things be at Alfen? There is no longer sound of firing."

"The darkness has doubtless interrupted the battle."

"Then let us hope for the best to-morrow; and even if all without lay down their arms, we here shall neither waver nor yield."

"We will stand fast to the end," answered Peter resolutely.

"To the end, and if God wills, a happy end."

"Amen!" cried Peter, pressing the commissioner's hand, and continued on his homeward way.

He was met on the stairs by Barbara. She was about to call Maria, who was with the fräulein, but he stopped her and began to walk thoughtfully up

and down the room. More than once his lips were drawn as though he were suffering great pain. When, after a time, he heard his wife's voice in the dining-room, he pulled himself together with an effort, went to the door, and opened it slowly.

"Home already!" she cried in surprise; "and here I am sitting quietly spinning."

"Yes, child. Come to my study; I want to speak with you."

"What is the matter, Peter? How strange your voice sounds, and how pale you are!"

"I am not ill, but matters are growing serious, very serious."

"Then it is true, the enemy——"

"They gained great advantage yesterday and again to-day; but I beg you, if you love me, do not interrupt me now, for what I have to say is not easily said. How shall I begin? How shall I put it, so that you will understand me aright? You know, child, that I took you into my house from a warm nest. What I could offer you was little, and you had doubtless expected to find more. I know you are not happy."

"But it would be very easy for you to make me happy."

"You are mistaken, Maria. In these troubled times, one thing alone occupies me, and anything that diverts my thoughts from that is injurious. But just now one thing is weakening my courage and resolution; it is anxiety for your fate; for who knows what may be threatening, and therefore I must sacrifice my feelings and express a wish—a wish? Oh, merciful Heaven! Is there no other word for what I mean?"

"Speak, Peter, speak, and do not torture me!" cried Maria, looking with terrified gaze into her husband's face. It could be no light matter that led

the clear-headed and resolute man to use such confused language.

The burgomaster controlled himself with an effort and began anew:

"You are right; it is useless to keep back what must be said. We have decided at the Rathhaus to-day to request the women to leave the city. The road to Delft is still open; day after to-morrow it may not be, and later—what may happen later, who can foretell? If no relief comes and the provisions give out, there will be nothing to do but open the gates to the enemy, and then, Maria, think of what will happen. The Rhine and the canals will be dyed crimson, for much blood will flow into them, and they will serve to reflect a conflagration such as has never been seen before. Woe to the men, but a thousand times more to the women, against whom the fury of the conquerors will be directed. And you—you—the wife of the man who has incited thousands to insurrection against King Philip, the wife of the exile who leads the resistance within these walls——"

Maria's eyes had opened wide at the last words, and she now interrupted her husband with the question: "Are you trying to test my courage?"

"No, Maria; I know that you would endure faithfully, and would look death in the face as undauntedly as your sister did; but I cannot bear the thought of seeing you fall into the hands of our butchers. Anxiety for you will undermine my strength at the decisive moment, and so——"

Maria had listened thus far in silence; she knew what he required of her. Now she came nearer to him and cut him short in a firm, almost authoritative voice.

"No more, no more, I tell you. I will not bear another word."

"Maria!"

"Silence! It is my turn now. To escape anxiety you mean to drive your wife from the house; anxiety, you say, would undermine your strength. But would longing strengthen it? If you love me it would not be wanting——"

"If I love you, Maria!"

"I know, I know. But you have forgotten to consider how this exile would affect me, if I love you in equal measure. I am your wife. We vowed at the altar that nothing should separate us but death. Have you forgotten? Have your children become mine? Have I taught them to call me mother gladly—yes or no?"

"Yes, Maria; yes, yes."

"And you have the heart to abandon me to this cruel longing? You wish to keep me from fulfilling the most sacred of all vows? You can bring yourself to tear me from the children? You think me too shallow and too weak to suffer want and death for the sacred cause, which is mine as well as yours! You are fond of calling me child; but I can be strong, too. You are the husband and can command; I am only the wife and shall obey. Shall I go? Shall I stay? I await your answer."

Her voice was trembling as she said this, and he cried in deep emotion:

"Stay, Maria, stay! Come, come, and forgive me!"

Seizing her hand, he cried again:

"Come, come!"

But she released herself, moved away from him, and said imploringly:

"Let me go, Peter, I cannot; I need time to recover from this."

He let his arms fall, and looked sadly into her face, but she turned away and left the room in silence.

He did not follow her, but went quietly to his study, and strove to fix his attention upon his work, but his thoughts turned constantly to Maria. His love oppressed him as if it were a crime, and he seemed to himself like a messenger who stops to pluck the flowers by the wayside, and in doing so wastes precious moments and forgets the mission upon which he is sent. His heart was unspeakably sad and heavy, and it was almost a relief to him when shortly before midnight the bell in the tower of Pancratius raised its warning voice. In danger, he knew he would feel and think of nothing but what duty demanded of him, and so with renewed strength he took his hat from the peg and left the house with a firm step.

In the street he met the Jonker van Duivenvoorde, who had come to summon him to the Hohenort Gate, before which a body of the Englishmen had again made their appearance—a handful of brave men who had held Alfen and the Gouda Lock in a hot and bloody struggle until their powder was exhausted and they were compelled to surrender or seek safety in flight. The burgomaster followed the jonker and ordered the gate to be opened for the brave soldiers. They were some twenty in number and among them the Netherland Captain van der Laen and a young German officer. Peter gave instructions that they should have shelter for the night in the Rathhaus and the guardhouse at the gate, and on the following morning suitable quarters would be found for them in the houses of the burghers. Janus Dousa asked the captain to accept his hospitality and the German betook himself to Aquanus' inn. All were ordered to report to the burgomaster at noon the next day that they might be assigned their quarters and enrolled in the volunteer regiments.

The ladies of the Van der Werff household were also roused by the alarm bell. Barbara sought Maria, and not until they had been informed of the cause of the ringing and had reassured Henrika, did they return to their rooms.

The burgomaster's wife could not sleep. Her husband's intention of separating himself from her in the face of threatening danger had roused her whole nature and wounded her to the quick. She felt herself humiliated and although not ignored, yet unappreciated by him for whose sake she rejoiced in every noble impulse and lofty aspiration that filled her soul. Of what avail was beauty of form and face to the wife of a blind man? of what avail was the rich treasure hidden in her breast, if he would not see it and make use of it? "Show him, tell him of what you are capable," urged love; but womanly pride interposed with: "Do not force upon him what he scorns to seek."

So the hours passed and brought her neither sleep nor peace, nor the will to forget the humiliation inflicted upon her.

At last Peter came into the bedroom, carefully and softly, so as not to waken her. She pretended to be asleep, but she could see him through her half-closed lids. The candlelight fell upon his face and the lines that she had noticed before lay like deep shadows between eyes and mouth. They stamped on his features the mark of heavy care and reminded Maria of the "too hard" and "if I can only bear it" that he had muttered in his sleep the preceding night. Then he approached her bed and remained standing there a long time: she did not see him, for she kept her eyes tightly closed, but the first loving glance with which he had looked down at her had not escaped her. It remained before her eyes, and she seemed to feel that he was looking at her tenderly and praying for her as for a child.

Sleep had long since overcome her husband, but she was still lying, wakeful as in broad daylight, watching the coming dawn. For the sake of his love she must forgive him much, but the humiliation she had suffered she could not forget. "A plaything," she said to herself, "a work of art in which we take delight, we always wish to place in safety as soon as danger threatens; the ax and bread, the sword, and the talisman that protects us, in short, what we cannot do without, we do not give up until the end. Necessary, indispensable to him, I am not. Had I done as he wished and left him, then—yes, then——"

Here the current of her thoughts was interrupted, for the first time the question arose in her mind: "Would he really have missed your helping hand, your encouraging word?"

She turned uneasily and her heart beat anxiously as she said to herself that she had done little to smooth his stony path. The vague suspicion that it was not altogether his fault if she had not found perfect happiness at his side, rose disturbingly in her mind. Did not her former conduct justify him in expecting from her hindrance rather than comfort and help in the coming days of peril?

Filled with an intense longing to gain a clear insight into her own heart she propped herself up in bed and let her past life pass in review before her.

Her mother had been a Catholic in her youth and had often told her how free and light-hearted she had felt when she had confessed everything that can trouble a woman's heart and had received from the servant of God the assurance that she could begin life anew, certain of forgiveness. "It is much harder for us now," her mother had said to her before her first communion, "for we of the Reformed faith are answerable to ourselves and to God, and we must

be wholly at peace with Him and ourselves before we can come to the Lord's table. That is indeed enough, for if we confess openly and unreservedly to the judge within us whatever weighs upon our consciences, be it in thought or deed, and honestly repent of it, we may be sure of forgiveness for the sake of the blood shed for us by the Saviour."

To such silent confession Maria now subjected herself and sternly and pitilessly reviewed her conduct. Yes, she had thought too much of herself, had demanded too much and given too little. She recognized her fault and resolved to make amends.

Her heart was lighter after this self-examination, and when at last she turned away from the dawning light to seek sleep, she looked forward joyfully to the loving greeting that she would give Peter in the morning; but she soon fell asleep and when she awoke, he had long since left the house.

As usual, before beginning any other work, she set Peter's study to rights, and as she did so she cast a friendly glance at the picture of his first wife. On the desk lay the Bible, the only book not connected with his business affairs that her husband was in the habit of reading. Barbara also derived comfort from it at times, but she used it as an oracle likewise, for whenever some disputed question arose she would open the book and point to some passage. This usually had a definite meaning and whatever it counseled she was in the habit usually, although not always, of doing. That very day she had disregarded its advice, for in answer to her question whether she might venture to send a box of good things to her son, one of the "Beggars of the Sea," in spite of the Spaniards who surrounded the city, she had received in reply the words of Jeremiah: "Their tents and their flocks shall they take away: they shall take to themselves their curtains, and all

their vessels and their camels." The box, notwithstanding, had been confided early that morning to a widow, who with her daughters intended to seek refuge in Delft. The gift might reach Rotterdam after all; a mother always expects miracles to be performed for her child.

Before Maria restored the Bible to its place she turned to the thirteenth chapter of the first Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, which speaks of love and was especially dear to her. "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not," and then, "Love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

To be longsuffering and kind, to hope all things and endure all things, this was the duty that love imposed upon her.

When she had closed the Bible and was preparing to go to Henrika, Barbara ushered Janus Dousa into the room. The young noble wore his armor and gorget and looked much more like a soldier than a scholar or a poet. He had sought Peter in vain at the Rathhaus and had hoped to find him at home. One of the messengers sent to the prince had returned from Dortrecht with a letter which appointed Dousa to the post of commanding officer left vacant by Allertssohn's death. He was to command not only the city troops but the entire armed force. He had accepted the appointment with cheerful alacrity and asked Maria to inform her husband of it.

"Accept my congratulation," said the burgomaster's wife; "but what will now become of your motto: '*Ante omnia Musæ?*'"

"I shall change the words a little and say: '*Omnia ante Musas.*'"

"Do you understand that gibberish, child?" asked Barbara.

"It means that the Muses are to be given their passports, for the present," answered Maria gayly.

Janus was pleased by the ready retort and exclaimed: "How happy and cheerful you look! In these dark times untroubled faces are scarce."

Maria flushed, for she did not know how to interpret the words of the nobleman who knew how to convey reproach with delicate sarcasm, and she answered frankly: "Do not think me frivolous, jonker. I know the gravity of the times, but I have just finished a silent confession and have found much that was bad in me, but also the determination to replace it with something better."

"I knew long ago," answered Janus, "that while in Delft you were on friendly terms with my old philosophers. 'Know thyself' was the principal teaching of the Greeks, and you are following it wisely. Every silent confession, every desire for inward purification, must begin with the resolve to know ourselves, and if in doing so we stumble against many things that do not redound to the credit of our beloved selves and we have the courage to find them as hideous in ourselves as in others——"

"Disgust follows naturally and we have taken the first step toward improvement."

"No, my dear lady, we are already standing on one of the topmost rounds. After hours of deep thought, do you know what Socrates recognized?"

"That he knew nothing. I have come to that conclusion much more rapidly."

"And the Christian learns that at school," said Barbara, wishing to share in the conversation. "All knowledge is imperfect."

"And we are all sinners," added Janus. "That is easy to say, my dear madam, and is easy to understand where others are concerned. '*He* is a sinner' is quickly said, but '*I* am a sinner' is harder to utter, and when we say it to ourselves

in anguish, in the quiet of our rooms, the white feathers of angels' wings are already mingling with the black pinions of the devil. Forgive me! Everything that one says and does nowadays is changed into bitter earnest. Mars is here and the cheerful Muses are silent. Give my respects to your husband and tell him also that Captain Allertssohn's body has been brought in and that the funeral is to take place to-morrow."

The jonker took his leave and Maria, after visiting her patient and finding her well and cheerful, sent Adrian and Lieschen into the garden by the city wall to gather flowers and leaves, which she meant with their help to make into wreaths for the brave soldier's coffin. She herself went to the captain's widow.

CHAPTER XXII.

Shortly before dinner, the burgomaster's wife returned home and found in front of the house a crowd of bearded soldiers. They were striving to make themselves intelligible in English to some of the constables, and, as the latter saluted Frau Maria respectfully, they also raised their hands to their helmets.

She nodded pleasantly and entered the hall into which the full light of noonday streamed through the open door.

Peter had been assigning quarters to the English soldiers outside, and, after consulting with the new commandant, Jan van der Does, had appointed their officers. They were doubtless waiting for their comrades, for, as the young woman set her foot on the first step of the stairs and glanced upward, she found that the upper end of the narrow flight was blocked by the tall figure of a soldier. His back was turned to her and he was showing Lieschen his dark velvet cap, encircled with rectangular points, above which curled a pale blue ostrich feather. The child seemed to have established a friendship with the soldier, for although the latter was denying her something, the little one laughed merrily.

Maria remained standing a moment, irresolute; but when the child seized the gay head-covering and set it on her own curly locks, she felt that she must reprove her, and called up chidingly: "Why, Lieschen, that is no plaything for a child."

The soldier turned, paused a moment in astonishment, and then leaped down the stairs with a few rapid bounds. Maria had stepped back in surprise; he left her no time to reflect, however, but stretched out both hands to her, and, with shining eyes, cried joyously: "Maria, Jungfrau Maria! You here? This is what I call a lucky day!"

Maria had recognized the soldier at once, and placed her hand in his readily, though not without some embarrassment.

The soldier's clear blue eyes sought hers, but she cast them down and said: "I am not what I was; the young girl has become the mistress of a household."

"The mistress of a household!" he cried. "How dignified that sounds! And yet! You are still Jungfrau Maria. You have not changed a bit. That is just the way you bent your head at the wedding at Delft; the very way you raised your hands; the way you cast down your eyes; and that is the selfsame divine blush."

In the voice that spoke these words with glad, almost childlike, unconstraint, there was an unusual sweetness, which was as pleasing to Maria as the officer's familiar manner was annoying to her. She raised her head with a swift movement, looked steadily into the young man's handsome face, and said with dignity:

"You see only the exterior, Jonker von Dornburg; within, many things have changed in these three years."

"Jonker von Dornburg!" he repeated, shaking his curly head. "In Delft I was Jonker Georg. Things have gone very differently with us, my dear lady, very differently. For see, my mustache has grown somewhat, although none too thickly. I have grown stouter, and the sun has browned my

pink and white boyish face; in short, my outer man has changed for the worse, but the inner man is exactly as it was three years ago."

Maria felt the blood mounting to her cheeks again, but she did not wish to blush, and answered quickly:

"Standing still is going backward, and so you have lost three good years, Herr von Dornburg."

The officer looked at Maria in surprise, and then said, more gravely than before:

"Your jest has more truth in it than you suspect: I had hoped to find you again in Delft, but our powder ran short at Alfen, and so the Spaniards will doubtless enter your native city sooner than we shall. And now a kind fate has led me to you here, but let me be quite frank. What I had hoped for and wished for, rises tangibly before my eyes. When I thought of our meeting, I dreamed that you would place both your hands in mine and would not receive me coldly, but would ask the old companion of happy days, Leonhard's best friend: 'Do you still remember our dead?' and when I had answered: 'Yes, yes, yes, I have never forgotten them,' then I thought the soft light of your eyes— Ah, I thank you! There are tears in your eyes. You have not changed as much as you had thought, Frau Maria, and if I hold the past in faithful remembrance, will you reproach me?"

"I will not indeed," she answered warmly. "And now that you speak to me like this, I shall be glad to call you Jonker Georg again, and invite you to my house as Leonhard's friend and mine."

"Ah, that is delightful!" he cried fervently. "I have so much to ask you, and as concerns myself—I wish I had less to tell."

"Have you seen my husband?" asked Maria.

"I know no one in Leyden," he answered, "except my learned host and the doge of this little Venice, so rich in water and bridges."

Georg pointed up the stairs. Maria reddened again and said:

"Burgomaster van der Werff is my husband."

The nobleman was silent for a moment. Then he said quickly:

"He received me most kindly. And the pretty little elf up there?"

"My husband's child by his first marriage, but mine also now. How did you happen to call her elf?"

"Because she looks as though she had been born among white flowers, in the moonlight, and because the flush of the morning, before which elves vanish, was in her cheeks when I caught her."

"She has already been given that name," said Maria. "Shall I take you to my husband?"

"Not now, Frau Bürgemeisterin, for I must see to the men outside there, but to-morrow if you will permit."

"I shall tell my husband who you are. *Auf wiedersehen*, Jonker Georg."

Maria found the dishes smoking on the table. The family had waited for her, and, heated by her rapid noonday walk, excited by the unexpected meeting with the young German, she opened the door of the study and called to her husband:

"Forgive me! I was detained. It is very late."

"We were quite willing to wait," he answered pleasantly, approaching her. Then she remembered all her good resolutions, and, for the first time since her marriage, she raised her husband's hand to her lips. He drew it away, smiling, kissed her on the forehead, and said:

"It is pleasant to have you still."

"Is it not?" she retorted, shaking her finger gently at him.

"But we are all here now, and dinner is waiting."

"Come then," she answered gayly. "Do you know whom I met on the stairs?"

"English soldiers."

"Yes, but among them Jonker von Dornburg."

"He has just presented himself to me. A fine, attractive young fellow, a German from the Protestant countries."

"He was Leonhard's best friend. Don't you remember? Surely I have told you about him. He was our guest at Jacoba's wedding."

"To be sure, Jonker Georg. He broke that vicious bay for the prince's equerry."

"It was a rash performance," said Maria, drawing a long breath.

"The bay still goes well," answered Peter. "Leonhard believed that the jonker would turn the world upside down with his gifts and accomplishments; I remember well, and now the poor fellow is forced to sit idly here and let himself be fed by us. How did he happen to join the English and take part in the struggle?"

"I do not know; he only told me that he had had many adventures."

"I can quite believe it. He is staying at Aquanus' inn, but perhaps we can find a room for him in the wing overlooking the courtyard.

"No, Peter," she cried impetuously, "there is no room in readiness."

"We can see about that later. At all events let us invite him to dinner to-morrow; he may have something to tell us. He asked me not to let him remain idle, but to put him on duty at once. Jan

van der Does will soon find the right place for him, for the new commandant is a good judge of men."

Barbara here took a part in the conversation, and, although it was a week day, Peter had a flask of wine brought up instead of the beer, and, what had not happened before for weeks, he remained a full quarter of an hour after the dishes had been removed, sitting at the table with the family and telling them of the Spaniards' rapid advance, the fate of the deserting Englishmen, who had been disarmed and sent away in detachments, the desperate resistance the body of English, to which the Jonker Georg belonged, had made at Alfen, and of another hot engagement in which Don Gaytan, the right hand and the best officer of the commander Valdez, was said to have fallen. Messengers were still going and coming on the Delft road, but by the next day it would doubtless be blocked by the enemy. As he talked, he turned constantly toward Maria except when Barbara questioned him directly, and when he rose at last from the table, he ordered a good roast for the morrow in honor of the guest whom he intended to invite himself. Hardly had the door to his study closed behind him, when little Elizabeth ran to Maria and clasping her about the knees, cried:

"Mother, isn't Jonker Georg the big captain with the blue feather who ran downstairs so quickly to meet you?"

"Yes, child."

"And he is coming to dinner to-morrow! Adrian, he is coming!"

The little one clapped her hands with delight and then ran to Barbara to cry again:

"Aunt Bärbel, do you hear? He is coming!"

"And the blue feather too," answered the widow.

"And he has curls, curls as long as Assendelft's little Clara's. May I go with you to Cousin Henrika, mother?"

"Later perhaps," answered Maria. "Now go, children, get the flowers and separate them nicely from the leaves. Trautchen will bring some hoops and string, and then we will make the garlands."

Jonker Georg's saying, that this was a lucky day, seemed to be proving true, for Maria found Henrika bright and free from pain. With the doctor's permission, she had been walking up and down the room and sitting at the open window for a long time. She had relished her chicken, and, as Maria entered she was sitting in the cushioned armchair with the pleasant consciousness of returning strength.

Maria was delighted with her patient's improved appearance and told her how well she was looking.

"I can return the compliment," replied Henrika. "You look like happiness personified. What pleasant thing has happened to you to-day?"

"To me? My husband was in a more cheerful mood than usual, and there was much to tell at dinner. I have only come to see how you are. *Auf wiedersehen.* I and the children have a sad task to perform."

"The children? What have the elf and Signor Salvatore to do with sadness?"

"Captain Allertssohn is to be buried to-morrow and we are going to make wreaths for the coffin."

"Make wreaths!" cried Henrika. "I can teach you how! Here, Trautchen, take the plate and send the children to me."

The maid left the room, but Maria said anxiously:

"You are undertaking too much, Henrika."

"I? I shall be singing to-morrow. It is my preserver's cordial! I tell you, it is doing wonders. Have you flowers and oak leaves enough?"

"I should think so!"

At that moment the door opened, and Lieschen entered the room cautiously, tiptoed across to Henrika, and when she had allowed herself to be kissed, she said eagerly:

"Cousin Henrika, do you know Jonker Georg with the blue feather is coming again to-morrow, and is to dine with us."

"Jonker Georg?" asked the fräulein.

Maria forestalled the child's reply, and answered in a constrained tone:

"Herr von Dornburg, an officer who came into the city with the Englishmen I told you about—a German—an old friend. Go, Lieschen, and help Adrian arrange the flowers; then I will come and help you."

"But here, with Cousin Henrika," begged the child.

"Yes, little elf, yes; and you and I will make the loveliest wreath that ever was seen."

The child ran out, and this time, in her joy, forgot to close the door softly.

Maria sat looking out of the window. Henrika watched her in silence for a time and then exclaimed:

"What is going on in the courtyard, Frau Maria? And what has become of the gladness in your eyes? Your house is not overrun with guests; why did you wait for Lieschen to tell me about the Jonker Georg, the German, the old friend?"

"Don't let us talk about it, Henrika."

"Yes, yes! Do you know what I think? The storm of war has blown into your house the young madcap with whom you passed so many pleasant hours at your sister's wedding. Am I right or wrong? You need not blush so deeply."

"It is he," answered Maria gravely. "But if

you love me, forget what I told you about him, or deny yourself the idle pleasure of alluding to it, for if you should persist in doing so, you would offend me."

"How should I? You are the wife of another."

"Of another whom I love and honor, who trusts me, and who himself invited the jonker to the house. I have liked the young man, admired his talents, and have been anxious about him when he trifled with his life."

"And now that you have seen him again, Maria?"

"I know what my duty is. See that you do not disturb my inward peace by idle talk."

"I will not indeed, Maria; but I am curious about this cavalier Georg and his singing. Unfortunately we shall not be together much longer. I must go home."

"The doctor will not let you travel."

"It does not matter; I shall go as soon as I feel well enough. My father is refused admission to the city, but your husband can do much. Will you tell him that I must speak with him?"

"Will you receive him to-morrow?"

"The sooner the better; and I say again, the ground is burning under my feet."

"Oh!" said Maria.

"That sounds quite mournful," cried Henrika. "Do you wish me to say how hard it is for me to part with you? I should not go yet, but my sister Anna, she is a widow now—thank God, I should like to say—and she is in distress and utterly forsaken. I must talk with my father about her and leave this quiet haven to go out into the storm."

"My husband shall come to you," said Maria.

"Very well!—Come in children! Put the flowers on the table there. You, little elf, sit down nicely

on the stool, and you, Salvatore, hand me the flowers. What is this? I really believe the boy has been putting perfumed oil on his curly head! In my honor, my preserver? Thank you! We shall not need the hoops until later. We will make bunches first and then tie them and the leaves to the hoops. Sing me a song, Maria, as I work. The first. I am strong enough to bear it to-day."

CHAPTER XXIII.

Half Leyden followed the coffin of the brave captain, and among the soldiers who paid the last honors to the gallant dead was Georg von Dornburg. After the funeral, Wilhelm, the musician, took to his own house the son of the good comrade whom so many mourned. Van der Werff had many things to attend to after the funeral, but he kept the noon hour free; for he was expecting the German to dinner.

The burgomaster sat, as usual, at the head of the table; between him and Maria, and opposite Barbara and the children, sat the jonker.

The widow was never tired of looking at the young man's fresh, sunny face, for, although her son could not compare with him in good looks, there was an honest expression in the jonker's eyes that reminded her of her Wilhelm.

Many a question and answer had already been exchanged, many pleasant recollections revived, when Peter, after the dishes had been removed and a fresh flask of wine placed upon the table, filled the jonker's glass anew and then raised his own.

"Let us drink," he cried, looking at the young nobleman with hearty good will, "let us drink to the triumph of the good cause, in which you have voluntarily drawn your sword. Thank you for pledging me so heartily. Drinking is an art and the Germans are masters of it."

"We learn it in many places and not the worst at the University of Jena."

"All honor to the doctors and professors who bring their pupils to such a state of perfection as my brother-in-law, and you also, to judge from this sample of your prowess."

"Leonhard was my master in the *ars bibendi*. How long ago it is!"

"Youth is not usually easily satisfied," answered Peter, "but when it comes to a question of years, what seems little to older people seems much to them. True, many experiences have doubtless been crowded into the latter years of your life. I can spare an hour or so, and, as we are sitting here so cozily, you might tell us, unless you wish to keep silent in regard to it, how you left your far-away home and your German and Latin books, to come to Holland under the English colors."

"Yes," added Maria unaffectedly; "you have told me nothing yet. Say your grace, children, and then go."

Adrian looked beseechingly from his mother to his father, and as neither forbade his staying he drew his chair close to his sister's, and with their heads together they listened with wide-open eyes as the jonker began his story, quietly at first and then with growing animation.

"You know that I come from Thuringia, a mountainous country in the heart of Germany. Our castle stands in a pleasant valley watered by a clear and winding stream. Wooded mountains, not as vast as those of Switzerland and yet by no means insignificant, border the narrow valley. At the foot of the mountains lie fields and meadows, and higher up rise forests of fir, which, like the huntsman, wear green all the year round. In winter, to be sure, the snow covers them with a mantle of glittering white.

When spring awakens, the firs send out young shoots as fresh and full of sap as the budding leaves on your oaks and beeches, and in the meadows by the river the warm air seems filled with snow, for the fruit trees blossom close together, and when the wind rises, the tender, white petals float like snow-flakes through the air and fall beside the bright flowers in the grass and on the clear surface of the river. Naked rock, too, there is in plenty on the higher portions of the mountains, and where they rise most precipitously and inaccessibly my fore-fathers have built their stronghold, to insure themselves against the attacks of their enemies. Our castle stands on the crest of a mountain in the midst of the valley of the Saale. Here I was born, here I spent my childhood and learned to read and write. There was plenty of hunting in the forests, we had spirited horses in the stables, and, wild lad that I was, I seldom entered the schoolroom voluntarily. Our gray-haired master, Lorenz, had to catch me when he wanted me. My sisters and Hans, the youngest child—the lad was only three years younger than I—gave him no trouble. I had an older brother, and yet I did not have him. When his beard was scarcely grown our gracious duke appointed him esquire to Chevalier von Brand, and he was sent to Spain to buy Andalusian horses. Johann Friedrich's father had learned their value in Madrid after the battle of Muhlburg. Ludwig was a gay lad when he went away, and there was not a horse but that he could tame. It was hard for our parents to believe him dead, but years passed, and as neither he nor the Chevalier von Brand appeared we were obliged to give him up for lost. Our mother alone did not give up hope, and was always expecting his return. My father called me the future heir and lord of the castle. When I had left

boyhood behind me and understood Cicero tolerably well I was sent to the University of Jena to study law, in order to become a councilor of state, as my uncle, the chancellor, desired.

"Oh, Jena! beloved Jena! There are days in May and in June when only fleecy clouds fleck the sky, and the leaves and flowers make so brave a show that one cannot help thinking—and they doubtless think so themselves—that they can never wither and die; like such a day is the time of merry student life in a man's existence. You will believe me, Leonhard has told you enough about Jena. He knew how to combine work with pleasure. As for me, I learned little on the wooden benches, for I seldom troubled them, and the dust of books certainly did not ruin my lungs; but I read Ariosto over and over again; I devoted myself diligently to singing; and, when my heart was full of storm and trouble, I used to compose many songs for my own comfort. I learned to use my sword in Jena, also, and I would have liked to cross blades with brave Captain Allertssohn, of whom you have told me. Leonhard was older than I, and when he had won his degree of Master of Arts I was still weak in the Pandects. But we were always close friends, and so I went with him to Holland to be present at his wedding. Ah, those were days! The theologians at Jena have quarreled stoutly over the exact location of the Garden of Eden. At that time I looked upon them all as fools, and thought: 'There is but one Eden, and that lies in Holland, and the fairest roses that were awakened by the dew on that first sunny morning bloom in Delft.'"

Georg stopped confusedly at these words and shook back his curling locks, but as no one interrupted him, and he saw Barbara's attentive face and the children's glowing cheeks, he went on more calmly:

"So I returned to my home, and learned for the first time that in life, also, fair, sunshiny days end too often in storm. I found my father ill, and a few days after my return he closed his eyes forever. I had never seen any one die before, and the first, the very first, was my father."

Georg paused, and passed his hand over his eyes with deep emotion.

"Your father," said Barbara, in a tone of hearty sympathy, breaking the silence, "to judge of the tree by the fruit, must have been a fine man."

The jonker raised his head and cried with shining eyes:

"Think of everything that is good and noble, and embody it in a tall, handsome man, and you have the picture of my father; and if I should tell you of my mother——"

"Is she still alive?" asked Peter.

"God grant she is!" cried the jonker. "I have heard nothing of my family for two months. There are pleasures in every path, and I am fond of my soldier's calling, but it is often hard to hear so seldom from home.

"After my father's death I was the heir, but I could take no pleasure either in hunting or in riding to court, in singing or in the clinking of glasses. I went about as one in a sleep, and it seemed as if I had no right to be happy without my father. Then —it is just two years ago—a messenger brought from Weimar a letter which had come from Italy, with several others, for our most gracious sovereigns; it contained nothing less than the news that our lost brother was still alive, and was lying ill and in want at the hospital at Bergamo. A good nun had written for him, and we now learned that on his way from Valencia to Livorno, Ludwig had been taken prisoner by pirates and carried to Tunis.

What he suffered there, amid what dangers he at last managed to gain his liberty, you shall hear some other time. He had escaped on a Genoese galley to Italy. His feet had carried him to Bergamo, but he could go no further, and he was now lying ill, perhaps dying, among charitable strangers. I lost no time in starting, and did not spare my horse on the journey to Bergamo; and, although there was much to be seen on the way that was beautiful and strange, I took but little pleasure in it, for the thought of Ludwig's condition saddened me at every turn. Every running brook hastened my steps, and the lofty mountains seemed like jealous barriers. Once beyond the mighty St. Gotthard, my heart grew lighter, and as I descended from Bellinzona to the Lake of Lugano, and the surface of the sparkling water smiled at me like a great blue eye, I forgot my sorrow for a moment, and, waving my hat, I broke into a song. At Bergamo I found my brother, alive, indeed, but feeble in body and mind, languid, and with no desire to bear the burden of life any longer. He was in good hands, and in a few weeks we were able to begin our homeward journey—by the Tyrol this time. Ludwig's bodily strength increased from day to day, but his spirit was broken. For long years he had toiled and borne heavy burdens, with chains on his feet, under a broiling sun. Chevalier Brand had been unable to endure this terrible fate; but Ludwig had forgotten in Tunis both how to laugh and to weep—and which of the two can we spare most easily?

"Even at the meeting with our mother, he could not shed a tear, and yet his whole body trembled with emotion, and surely his heart was not unmoved. He now rules quietly at the castle. In the very prime of life he is an old man, but he is beginning

to accommodate himself to the world again, only he cannot bear the sight of a strange face. I had a hard struggle with him, for, as the eldest son, the castle and estate belonged to him, but he wished to give up his rights and place me in his stead. When he had brought our mother over to his side, and my uncle and brothers and sisters strove to persuade me to do as he wished, I remained firm. I did not care to touch what was not mine, and Hans, the youngest boy, had grown up and could take my place wherever it was necessary. When the prayers and entreaties grew too much for me, I saddled my horse and went away again. It was hard for my mother to let me go, but I had tasted the delights of travel and set out as though on my way to a wedding. To be quite frank, I must confess that I resigned castle and possessions as I would a heavy burden. Free as the air and the clouds, I took the same way that I had taken with Leonhard, for in your country a war was going on quite after my own heart, and my future fortunes were to be dependent upon my sword. At Cologne I took service under Louis of Nassau, and at Mooker Heide I fought until we could hold our ground no longer. My horse had fallen under me, my doublet was torn, my knapsack lost, there was little left me save good spirits and the hope of happier days. These soon came, for Captain Gensfort pressed me to join his English troops. I became his lieutenant and fought at his side at Alfen until the powder gave out. What took place then, you know."

"And Captain van der Laen has told us," interrupted Peter, "that he owes his life to you. You fought like a lion"

"There was hot fighting at the fort, and yet neither I nor my horse was injured as much as a hair. And this time I even saved my knapsack and

a full purse. Fate loves her troublesome children the best, just as mothers do, and so she has brought me to your house, Herr Bürgemeister."

"And I beg of you," answered Peter, "to number yourself among its inmates. We have two pleasant rooms that open upon the courtyard; they shall be made ready for you if you will accept them."

"With pleasure," answered the jonker, and Peter, giving him his hand, said:

"My duties call me away, but you may tell the ladies what you need and when you expect to come. The sooner, the better we shall like it. Is it not so, Maria?"

"You will be welcome, Jonker Georg. Now I must go to my patient. Barbara will hear your wishes."

The young wife took her husband's hand and left the room with him.

The widow remained alone with the jonker and questioned him as to his needs. Then she followed her sister-in-law, and when she had found her with Henrika, she clapped her hands and exclaimed:

"There is a man for you! Fräulein. I tell you that, old woman as I am, I have never met with such a man. Such a heart, such a heart, and so handsome too! Fortune showers benefits upon her favorites, 'and unto him that hath, shall be given!' Those are golden words!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

Peter had promised Henrika to try and persuade the council to provide her with an escort.

It was hard for her to leave the burgomaster's house. Maria's open nature had had a good effect upon her; it seemed as though, in her presence, her respect for her own sex increased. She had also heard Maria sing on the previous day. Her voice was like her character. Each tone was clear and flawless as a bell. She was grieved that she would not be able to join her in her singing. She was also sorry to part from the children. And yet she must go, on Anna's account, for her father was not to be influenced by letter. If she had written to him, begging for forgiveness for the child he had disowned, he would scarcely have read the letter to the end. She could accomplish much more by words, at some favorable moment. She must speak to him, but she shrank from the life at the castle, and she had to confess to herself that she was anything but necessary to her father. In order to secure the inheritance, he had sent her to her aunt and had subjected her to a life of misery; while she lay at death's door, he had ridden to the tourney, and the letter she had received from him the day before contained nothing but the information that he was denied admittance into the city, and the command that she should go to the house of Jonker de Heuter at the Hague. Enclosed she found a letter of safe conduct from the commander-in-chief,

Valdez, in which all officers and soldiers were enjoined to provide for her safety.

The burgomaster proposed to have her carried in a litter and escorted to the Spanish lines by an officer with a flag of truce, and, as the doctor raised no objection to her wish to travel, she hoped to be able to leave that very day.

She seated herself thoughtfully in the recess and looked out upon the courtyard. Several windows in the eastern wing stood open. Trautchen must have risen early, for she came out of the rooms intended for the jonker, followed by a maid carrying brooms and scrubbing brushes. Then Jan appeared with a big armchair held over his head. Lieschen came running after him, crying:

"Aunt Bärbel's grandfather's chair; where is she going to take her afternoon nap, now?"

Henrika heard the words, and thought first of good old "Babetta" and then of Maria and of the man who was to be quartered in the rooms opposite. Did not some loose threads still remain of the old bond that had existed between the burgomaster's wife and the handsome young officer? A slight shudder ran through her. Poor Meister Peter, poor Maria! Was it right to forsake, at this moment of all others, the woman who had held out a helping hand to her in her distress? Yet her sister stood much nearer to her than this stranger! Each day that she remained in the enjoyment of this peaceful retreat seemed stolen from Anna —since she had read in a letter from her sister to her husband, the only one contained in the dead soldier's wallet, that she was ill and she and her child were in want.

Help was needed here and she was the only one who could give it.

With Maria's and Barbara's assistance she packed

her belongings. At noon all was ready for her departure and she would not be withheld from dining for the first time with the family. Peter was unable to be present at dinner, so she took his place and concealed under affected gayety the sorrow and misgivings that were oppressing her. At twilight the burgomaster's wife and the children followed her into her room, and she had her harp brought and began to sing. At first many notes in the deep voice were weak and uncertain, but like the snow that falls from the mountain heights to the plains, slowly, at first, and hesitatingly, then suddenly gathers volume and strength, her voice gained gradually in fullness and power, and, when at last she leaned her harp against the wall and walked, exhausted, to her chair, Maria seized her hand and said, deeply moved:

"Stay with us, Henrika."

"I cannot," answered the other. "Besides you are sufficient to yourselves. Shall I take you with me, children?"

Adrian looked down in embarrassment, but Lieschen threw herself into her lap and cried:

"Where are you going? Why not stay with us?"

There came a knock at the door at this moment and Peter entered. His face showed that he brought no good news. His request had been refused at the council. There had been almost unanimous assent to Van Bronkhorst's proposal, that the young lady, as a relative of prominent Spanish sympathizers among the Netherland nobility, should be detained in the city. If it came to a surrender, the presence of Fräulein van Hoogstraten, although it would scarcely prevent pillage and murder, might place some restraint upon the leaders. Peter's objections had been disregarded;

he told the fräulein honestly of the struggle he had had and begged her to be patient and remain in his house as a welcome guest.

She interrupted him with many violent exclamations of anger and indignation, and when she had grown calmer, cried:

"I should be glad to stay with you, but you know from what this shameful decision is keeping me. And then, to be made a prisoner, to have to go on for weeks and months without mass and without confession! But above all—what is to become of my unfortunate sister?"

Maria looked imploringly at Peter and the latter said:

"If you desire the consolations of your religion I will send Father Damianus to you and you can hear mass as often as you like at the convent of the Gray Nuns, near by. We are not fighting against your faith, but for the free exercise of all faiths, and the whole city is open to you. Your anxiety about your sister, my wife can help you bear better than I can, but I would say that whenever and wherever I can help you I will do so, and not with words alone."

So saying, he held out his hand to Henrika. She gave him hers and exclaimed:

"I am much indebted to you, I know, but please leave me now and give me until to-morrow to reflect."

"There is no chance of the council altering its decision?" asked Maria.

"No, certainly not."

"Well, then," said the burgomaster's wife earnestly, "you must remain with us. The thought of your sister disturbs my peace as well as yours. Let us think of her first of all. How are the roads to Delft?"

"They are blocked and by to-morrow or next day no one can get through."

"Then compose yourself, Henrika, and let us consider what is to be done."

Then began questions and counter-questions, and Henrika looked in amazement at Maria, for she led the consultation with unerring decision and keenness. It was decided that the best solution was to find that very day a trusty messenger to carry money to Anna d'Avila, and, if possible, bring her to Holland. The burgomaster declared himself ready to advance from his own purse a portion of the sum willed by the dead fräulein to Henrika's sister, which legacy would undoubtedly be recognized, and received his guest's thanks without contraint.

But whom could they send?

Henrika thought of the musician, Wilhelm; he was a friend of her sister.

"But he is in the service," answered the burgomaster. "I know him. He would not leave the city in these times of peril; not even for his own mother."

"I know the very man," said Maria. "We will send Jonker Georg."

"That is worth considering," said Peter. "We shall find him at his lodgings. I must go to Van Hout, who lives near the inn, and I will send the young German to you. But my time is limited and pretty women can do much more with such men than a man can. Farewell, fräulein, and once more: we are glad that you are to remain our guest."

When the burgomaster had left the room, Henrika said:

"How differently everything has turned out from what I expected! I am fond of you, I am indebted to you, but to be a prisoner, a prisoner! The walls will press upon me, the ceilings will crush me. I do not know whether to rejoice or despair. You can

do much with the jonker. Tell him about Anna, move his heart, and if he were to go it would indeed be best for us both."

"You mean for you and your sister," said Maria with a protesting motion of her hand. "There is the lamp. I will see you again when the jonker comes.

Maria went to her room, and, once there, flung herself upon the couch, but soon rose and restlessly paced the room. Then stretching out her clasped hands, she cried:

"Oh, if he would only go, if he would only go! Kind, gracious Father in heaven, grant him every happiness, every blessing, but leave me my peace of mind; let him go and lead him away, far away from here."

CHAPTER XXV.

Aquanus' tavern stood on the "Breite Strasse," and was an imposing building with a great court-yard, where numerous vehicles were standing. At the left of the entrance was a spacious room devoid of doors, and into which one entered by a lofty arch-way. Here drivers and other folk were sitting over their beer and wine and good-naturedly suffering the landlord's hens to alight upon the benches and occasionally upon the very tables; here, before the great hearth, vegetables were being prepared and cooked; here the sturdy hostess was not seldom obliged to call upon the strapping maid and men-servants for help when the guests came to actual blows, or some one drank more than was good for him. Here, too, the new practice of smoking was being indulged in, though only by a few sailors who had served on Spanish ships—but Frau van Aken could not bear the acrid smoke, and kept open the windows where stood blossoming carnations, slender stalks of balsam, and bird-cages filled with brilliant goldfinches. On the other side of the entrance were two closed rooms. Above the door of the first, were neatly carved in wood the lines from Horace:

> "*Ille terrarum mihi præter omnes*
> *Angulus ridet.*"*

* Of all corners of the earth there is none that suits me better.

To this long and narrow room, only a few favored guests found admittance. It was entirely wainscoted with wood, and in the center of the richly carved ceiling was an extraordinary picture painted in brilliant hues. It represented the master of the house. The worthy man with the smooth face, the firmly closed mouth, and the long nose, which afforded an admirably straight line for its owners' engraving tool, was seated on a throne in the costume of a Roman general, while Vulcan and Bacchus, Minerva and Pomona were offering him gifts. Klaus van Aken, or as he preferred to call himself, Nikolaus Aquanus, was an unusual man, who had indeed received favors at the hands of more than one inmate of Olympus; for in addition to his calling, he devoted himself with zeal to science and various arts. He was a skillful silversmith, a die-cutter, and engraver of great ability, an excellent judge of coins, an industrious scholar, and a collector of antiquities. His little taproom was also a museum; for on the shelves that lined the entire room stood curios of every description, neatly arranged and in great abundance; old tankards and mugs, small and large coins, gems in carefully locked glass cases, antique lamps of clay and bronze, stones with Roman inscriptions, Roman and Greek terra-cotta, polished bits of marble that he had found among Italian ruins, the head of a faun, an arm, a foot, and other fragments of pagan art; a beautifully enameled casket of Byzantine work, and another from Limoges; part of a Roman coat-of-mail, and a piece of mosaic from a Roman bath were also to be seen here. Among these antiquities stood beautiful bits of Venetian glass, pine cones, and ostrich eggs. Another such taproom was not to be found in all Holland, and the wines that a neat barmaid poured from curiously shaped flagons into

goblets of fine workmanship were of unusual excellence. In this room Herr Aquanus was accustomed to appear in person among his guests, while in the room opposite his wife held sway.

The "Angulus," as the handsome room was usually called, was but sparsely filled, for the sun had set but a short time before. The candles were already lighted. They stood in tall, three-branched, iron candelabras. Every part of the latter, the slender central stem as well as the curved and intertwining branches, had been carefully wrought by Aquanus' own hand.

Several elderly gentlemen were seated at a table over their wine; at another sat Captain van der Laen, a gallant Hollander who served under the English colors, and had come into the city with the other defenders of Alfen, the musician, Wilhelm, Jonker Georg, and their host.

"It is a pleasure to meet men like you, jonker," Aquanus was saying. "You have traveled with your eyes open, and my curiosity is roused by what you tell me of Brescia. I should like to have the inscription."

"I will get it for you," answered the jonker, "for unless the Spaniards send me into another world I shall certainly cross the Alps again. Did you find any of these Roman antiquities in your own country?"

"Yes. Near the Roomburg canal, the site of the old Prætorium perhaps, and near Katwyk. The ancient *forum Hadriani* doubtless stood in the vicinity of Voorburg. It was there that I found the coat-of-mail yonder."

"An old, moldy, rust-eaten thing," cried Georg. "And yet! What thoughts the sight of it calls up! Did not some Roman armorer forge it perhaps for the wandering emperor? When I look at this coat-

of-mail, Rome and her legions rise before my eyes. Who would not, like you, Herr Wilhelm, visit the Tiber and prolong the short span of the present by meditating upon past centuries?"

"I should be glad to visit Italy again with you," answered Wilhelm.

"And I with you."

"Let us secure our liberty first," returned the musician. "When that is done, a man's time can be his own, and then—why should I conceal it—there will be nothing to keep me in Leyden."

"And the organ? And your father?" asked Aquanus.

"My brothers are content to remain at home," answered Wilhelm, "but something urges, drives me——"

"There are placid waters on the earth," interrupted Georg, "the fixed stars remain stationary in the sky, and the planets must continue their wanderings. Some men are contented with their lot and others are birds of passage like us. I glory in being what we are. There is no need for you to go to Italy to hear fine singing, though. I have just heard a voice, a voice——"

"Where? I am all eagerness."

"In the courtyard of Van der Werff's house."

"It was the burgomaster's wife."

"Oh, no, her voice is very different."

During this conversation the captain had risen and was examining the host's curious treasures. Finally he paused before a board upon which the head of an ox was sketched in charcoal with free, bold lines.

"That is a magnificent specimen of an ox," he remarked to the host.

"It was drawn by no less a man than Frank Floris," answered Aquanus. "He once came

here from Brussels to see Meister Artjen. But the old man had gone out. Floris took up a piece of charcoal and made this sketch. When Artjen came home and found the ox's head, he stood before it a long time and at last cried: 'Frank Floris, or the devil!' This story— But there comes Herr Bürgemeister. Welcome, Meister Peter! This is, indeed, a rare honor."

All the guests rose and saluted Van der Werff respectfully. Georg too sprang up to offer him his chair. Peter seated himself for a moment and drank a glass of wine, but soon after he beckoned to the jonker and led him out into the street.

There he briefly requested him to go to his house as they had an important communication to make to him there. Then he walked away in the direction of the house of the clerk of the council.

Georg walked on eagerly toward his destination.

By "they," none other than Maria could be meant. What could she want of him at so late an hour? Perhaps his friends had regretted having offered him shelter beneath their roof. He was to move into his new quarters early the following morning. Perhaps they wished to inform him of their change of mind, before it was too late. Maria's manner toward him was very different from what it had formerly been, there was no doubt of that, but it was quite natural! He had, indeed, dreamed of a different, a very different meeting! He had come to Holland to aid the good cause of Orange, but he would certainly have turned his horse, not north, but toward his beloved Italy where a good sword was always in demand, if he had not hoped to find in Holland her whom he had never forgotten and for whom he had never ceased to long. Now she was the wife of another man, a man who had

been kind to him and who trusted him. To tear his love from his heart was impossible; but he owed it to her husband and to his own honor to remain strong, to suppress every thought of calling her his own, and to take pleasure only in seeing her; this he must strive to accomplish.

He had already said this to himself more than once, but when she met him outside the dining-room and he felt how cold and tremulous was the hand she placed in his, he realized more than ever that he was walking on a narrow path with very uncertain steps.

She preceded him to Henrika's room and he followed silently. Henrika welcomed him with a friendly gesture. Both ladies were reluctant to begin the conversation, but the young officer, glancing around him hastily and seeing that he was in the room that overlooked the courtyard, said eagerly:

"I was in the courtyard a little before dark, to take a look at my new quarters, and I heard singing in this room, and such singing! I did not know at first what was coming, for the tones were husky, weak, and tremulous, but then—then they burst forth like a stream of lava through the ashes. One cannot help wishing many sorrows to one who can give such expression to them."

"You shall become acquainted with the singer," said Maria, pointing to her friend. "Fräulein Henrika van Hoogstraten, an honored guest of ours."

"You were the singer?" asked Georg.

"Does it surprise you?" answered Henrika. "My voice has kept its strength better than my body, weakened by long illness. I know how sunken my eyes are and how pale I must be. Singing relieves suffering, but I have had to do long without my

comforter. Not a note has passed my lips for weeks and now my heart is so heavy that I would rather weep than sing. 'What is that to me?' you say, and yet Maria has given me the courage to make an unparalleled request of you."

"Speak, speak," said Georg eagerly. "If Frau Maria appeals to me and I can serve you, my dear lady, here I stand. Do with me what you will."

Henrika did not avoid his frank glance as she answered:

"Hear, first, how great a service we ask of you. At the very beginning you must resign yourself to hear a short story. I am still weak and my strength has been put to a severe test to-day. Maria will speak for me."

Maria fulfilled her task quietly and concisely and closed with the words:

"I have myself found the messenger we need. It is you, Jonker Georg."

Henrika had not once interrupted the burgomaster's wife, but she now said warmly:

"This is the first time I have met you but I trust you perfectly. A few hours ago black would have been my color, but if you will be my knight, I will choose green, for I begin to hope anew. Will you undertake the quest for me?"

Georg had kept his eyes fixed upon the ground. He now raised his head and said:

"If I can obtain leave, I will place myself at your disposal; but my lady's color is blue and I may wear no other."

Henrika's lips trembled slightly, but the jonker went on:

"Captain van der Laen is my superior officer. I will speak to him at once."

"And if he says no?" asked Maria.

Henrika interrupted her and answered haughtily:

"Then be so kind as to send the musician Wilhelm to me."

Georg bowed and returned to the inn.

As soon as the two women were alone, the fräulein asked:

"Do you know who Herr von Dornburg's lady is?"

"How should I?" answered Maria. "You must take some rest, fräulein. As soon as the jonker returns, I will bring him to you."

The young wife went out and seated herself at the spinning-wheel beside Barbara. Georg kept them waiting a long time. He returned at last at midnight, and he did not come alone but with two companions. It had not been in the captain's power to grant him leave of absence for several weeks—it would require that time to make the journey to Lugano—but the jonker had gone at once to consult with the musician, and the latter had found the right messenger. Wilhelm had soon come to an agreement with the man and had brought him there without delay: it was the old steward, Belotti.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The spacious shooting grounds that lay not far from the White Gate, between the Rapenburg and the city wall, presented an animated scene on the morning of the following day, for, by the decree of the council, all burghers and inhabitants, without exception, rich and poor, high and low, were to take a solemn oath of fidelity to the prince and to the good cause.

Under a clump of lindens, stood, in robes of state, Commissioner van Bronkhorst, Burgomaster van der Werff, and two aldermen, who were to administer the oath to the throng of old men, young men, and boys. The solemn ceremony had not yet begun. Janus Dousa, in full uniform, his coat-of-mail over his leathern doublet and his helmet on his head, approached Meister Peter and the commissioner, arm-in-arm with Van Hout.

"It is as I told you!" he said. "There is not one missing from among the humbler classes, but the gentlemen in velvet and fur are but poorly represented."

"They shall come yet!" cried Van Hout threateningly.

"What will forced oaths avail us?" answered the burgomaster. "He who wishes freedom, must grant freedom. Moreover, this hour will show us upon whom we may rely."

"There is not a man of the burgher guard miss-

ing," said the commissioner. "That is encouraging. What is that up there in the tree?"

The men looked up and discovered Adrian, who had hidden himself in the branches of one of the lindens.

"The boy must be everywhere!" cried Peter. "Come down, you rascal. You appear at the right time."

The lad swung himself from a branch to the ground and approached his father with the air of a repentant sinner, which he knew how to assume when occasion required. The burgomaster did not reprove him but bade him go home and tell his mother that there was no possibility of getting Belotti safely through the Spanish lines, and further, that Father Damianus had promised to visit the fräulein in the course of the day. "Hurry, Adrian," he went on, "and you, constables, see that all intruders are kept away from here, for any place where an oath is taken becomes sacred ground. The clergymen have seated themselves yonder near the targets. They have the precedence. Have the goodness to call them, Van Hout. Dominie Verstroot wishes to make an address and then I would like to speak a few words of exhortation myself to the people."

Van Hout moved away, but before he had reached the clergyman, Jonker van Warmond appeared and announced that a messenger, a comely lad, had arrived with a flag of truce. He was waiting at the White Gate and had a letter to deliver.

"From Valdez?"

"I do not know; but the lad is a Hollander and his face is familiar to me."

"Bring him here; but do not disturb us until the administration of oaths is over. Let the messenger

tell Valdez what he has seen and heard. It will be well for the Castilian to know from the first what we mean to do."

The jonker took his departure, and when he returned to the shooting grounds with Nicolas van Wibisma—for he was the messenger—Dominie Verstroot had ended his stirring address. Van der Werff was still speaking. The sacred fire of enthusiasm shone in his eyes and, although the few words that he addressed to his assembled fellow combatants were simple and unpretending, they found their way to his hearers' hearts.

Nicolas also listened to the speech with glowing cheeks, and it seemed as though the tall, earnest man under the lindens were speaking to him and to him alone when, at the close of his speech, he raised his voice and cried with exaltation:

"And now, let come what will! A brave man in your midst said to-day: 'We will not yield as long as we have a hand left to carry bread to our mouths and to hold a sword.' If we all think thus, twenty Spanish armies will find their graves before these walls. Upon Leyden depends the freedom of Holland. If we waver and fall, to escape the misery that only threatens us to-day but will oppress and torture us without pity later, our children will say: 'The men of Leyden were blind cowards; it is their fault that the name of Hollander is no more respected than that of a miserable slave!' But if we hold out faithfully and resist the grim foreigner to the last man and the last crust of bread, they will think of us with tears and cry joyfully: 'It is due to them that our noble, industrious, happy people can place itself proudly beside the other nations.' He who loves honor, who is not a degenerate son who betrays his father's house; he who would rather be a free man than a bondsman, let him cry

with me, before raising his hand in a solemn vow to God: 'Long live Orange and free Holland!'"

"Long shall they live!" shouted hundreds of powerful voices, five, ten, twenty times. The gunner discharged the cannon planted near the targets, the air shook with the rolling of drums and the repeated flourish of trumpets, the ringing of bells from every tower in the city echoed above the heads of the enthusiastic crowd, and the cheering continued, uninterrupted, until the commissioner made a sign and the administration of the oath began.

The guilds and the armed defenders of the city pressed forward toward the lindens. Hands were raised, now enthusiastically, now with dignified composure, now with thoughtful exaltation. One hour and then another passed before all had been sworn, and many who had advanced together to the lindens grasped each other's hands earnestly in a second, silent vow.

Nicolas van Wibisma sat silently beside a target opposite the spot where the oath was being administered, but painful, bitter thoughts were surging in his breast. How gladly he would have wept aloud and torn his father's letter to fragments! How gladly, when he saw the venerable Herr van Montfort advance hand in hand with the gray-haired Seigneur von Nordwyk, would he have hastened to their side to take the oath and cry to the earnest man under the lindens:

"I am not a degenerate wretch who betrays his father's house; I will not be a bondsman, I will not be a Spaniard; I am a Netherlander like you."

But he did not go, he did not speak, he remained sitting motionless until the ceremony was ended and the Jonker van Warmond conducted him to the lindens. The clerk of the council and the two

Seigneurs van der Does had joined the other magistrates. With a silent bow, Nicolas handed the burgomaster his father's letter. Van der Werff opened it, and, when he had read it, handed it to the other gentlemen; then turning to Nicolas, he said:

"Wait here, jonker. Your father counsels us to surrender the city to the Spaniards and promises us the king's clemency. You cannot be in doubt as to our answer, after what you have seen here."

"There is but one answer," cried Van Hout as he read, "and that is, to tear the thing up and make no reply."

"Ride home, now, and God be with you," added Janus Dousa; "but wait, I will give you something for the commander-in-chief."

"Then you will deign no reply to my father's letter?" asked Nicolas.

"No, jonker. We wish to have no dealings with Baron Matenesse," answered the commissioner. "As for you, you may return or wait here; just as you choose."

"Go to your cousin, jonker," said Janus Dousa kindly; "it will be an hour before I have found paper and ink and sealing wax. Fräulein van Hoogstraten will be glad to hear of her father through you."

"If you choose, young sir, my house stands open to you," added the burgomaster.

Nicolas hesitated a moment and then said quickly:

"Yes, take me to my cousin."

When the lad arrived at the north end in company with Herr van Warmond, who had undertaken to escort him, he asked:

"You are Jonker van Duivenvoorde, Herr van Warmond?"

"I am he."

"And you were among the Beggars who took Brill from the Spaniards?"

"I had that good fortune."

"And yet you belong to the old nobility, and there were other nobles among the Beggars, were there not?"

"Most assuredly. Do you think it ill becomes us to have some love for the home of our fathers? My ancestors and yours were noble before a single Spaniard trod this soil."

"But King Philip rules us as rightful sovereign."

"Unfortunately. And therefore we obey his stadtholder, the prince, who rules in his name. The perjured tyrant needs a guardian. Question me further; I shall be glad to answer."

Nicolas let this invitation pass unheeded and walked on beside his companion in silence until they reached the Achtergracht. There he stopped, and, seizing the captain's arm, he burst out excitedly:

"It is breaking my heart. I must tell some one! I want to be a Netherlander. I hate the Castilians. I have come to know them at Leyderdorp and at the Hague. They pay no heed to me because I am young and they do not know that I understand their language. My eyes have been opened. When they speak of us, it is with scorn and contempt. I know all that Alva and Vargas have done. From the Spaniards' own lips I have heard that they wish to destroy us, exterminate us. If I could only do as I wished, and if it were not for my father, I know well what I should do. My head is still in a whirl. The burgomaster's speech is driving me mad. Tell him, jonker, I beg of you, tell him that I hate the Spaniards and that I am proud of being a Netherlander."

Both had already resumed their way, and as they drew nearer to the burgomaster's house the captain,

who had listened to the lad with pleasant surprise, said:

"There is good stuff in you, jonker, and you are on the right road. Keep Herr Peter's speech in mind and remember what you have learned in history. Whose names stand forth in the pages of the world's history? The names of tyrants, their slaves and eye-servers, or the men who have lived and died for liberty? Up with your head! This struggle will outlive us both, perhaps, and you still have plenty of time to place yourself on the right side. The noble should serve his prince, but he should not be the creature of any sovereign, last of all of a foreigner, the enemy of his people. Here we are. I will come for you in an hour. Give me your hand. I should like to call you by your Christian name in future, my brave Nico."

"Yes, call me so;" cried the jonker, "and you will not send any one in your place, will you? I should like to talk with you again."

At the burgomaster's house the jonker was received by Barbara. Henrika could not see him immediately. Father Damianus was with her, so he was obliged to wait in the dining-room until the priest appeared. Nicolas knew him well and had even confessed to him once the year before. When he had saluted the venerable man and had answered his question as to how he had come there, he said without further ceremony:

"Good father, forgive me; but something is weighing upon my heart. You are a holy man and you must know. Is it a sin for a Hollander to take up arms against the Spaniards? is it a sin for a Hollander to wish to remain what the good Lord himself made him? I cannot believe it."

"Nor do I," answered Father Damianus simply. "Whoever holds fast to the holy church, whoever

loves his neighbor and strives to do what is right, may safely be on the side of Holland and fight and pray for the freedom of his country."

"Ah!" said Nicolas with shining eyes.

"For look you," went on Father Damianus more vehemently, "they were good Catholics here and prayed devoutly and in a manner pleasing to God, before the Spaniards ever came into the country. Why should it not be so again? The Almighty has separated the nations because it is His will that they should lead their own lives and order them to their good and His honor; but not to give to the stronger nation the right to torture and oppress another. Suppose your father were taking a walk and a Spanish grandee were to spring upon his shoulders and make him taste whip and spur as though he were his horse. It would fare ill with the Castilian! Put Holland in the place of Baron Matenesse and powerful Spain in the place of the grandee and you will know what I mean. Thus there is nothing left us to do but to throw off the oppressor. The holy church will suffer no harm thereby. God has established it and it will stand whether King Philip or another reign here. Now you know my opinion. Am I mistaken in believing that the name of Glipper is no longer pleasing to you, my dear jonker?"

"No, Father Damianus! You are right, a thousand times right. It is no sin to wish for a free Holland."

"Who told you that it was?"

"Canon Bermont and our chaplain."

"Then I differ with them on this worldly question. Render to God what is God's, and remain where the Lord has placed you. If you still wish to fight for Holland when your beard has grown, do so with a clear conscience. For such a sin I would give you absolution gladly."

Henrika was delighted to see her young cousin again. She made Nicolas tell her of her father and of his own family, and how he himself had come to Leyden. When she learned that he meant to set out on his return within an hour, preoccupied as she was with the thought of Belotti's mission, a happy idea occurred to her. She confided her purpose to Nicolas, and implored him to conduct Belotti in safety through the Spanish lines to the Hague. The jonker was not only willing to do so, but promised her that when the old man returned he would manage in some way to let her know of it.

At the end of an hour the jonker bade her farewell, and as he was again walking along the Achtergracht with Herr van Warmond, he asked the latter:

"How can I get to the Beggars?"

"You?" asked the captain in astonishment.

"Yes, I," answered the lad eagerly. "I shall soon be seventeen, and as soon as I am— Wait, only wait: you shall hear of me yet."

"Well done, Nicolas, well done," returned the other. "Let us remain Holland nobles and noble Hollanders!"

Three hours later Jonker Matenesse rode into the Hague with Belotti, of whom he had been fond from childhood. He brought his father nothing but a carefully folded and sealed letter, which Janus Dousa with a mischievous smile had delivered to him on behalf of the citizens of Leyden for the Commander-in-chief Valdez, and which contained the lines from Dionysius Cato, written in a delicate hand on a great sheet of paper:

"*Fistula dulce canit volucrem dum decipit anceps.*"

"Sweet are the tones of the flute when the fowler lures the bird to the snare."

CHAPTER XXVII.

The first week in June and the half of the second had gone, the fine sunny days had come to an end, and in the evening hours many guests sought the "Angulus" in the inn on the *Breite Strasse*. It was very cozy there when the wind from the sea howled without; the rain poured down, and the water fell plashing upon the pavement. The beleaguering army encompassed the city like an iron wall. Men regarded each other as fellow prisoners, and drew more closely to those of their own class and opinions. All business was at a standstill; inactivity and anxiety weighed like lead upon the spirits of all; and such as wished to relieve their depression, and make the lagging hours pass more quickly, resorted to the taverns to give expression to their own hopes and fears, and hear what others felt and thought in the common distress.

All the tables in the "Angulus" were filled, and any one who wished to make himself heard by an acquaintance seated at some distance was forced to raise his voice very considerably, for conversations were being carried on at every table. There were also constant calls for the busy barmaid, glasses clinked, and pewter covers clashed upon tankards of solid stoneware.

At a round table at the lower end of the long room, the talking was louder than at any other. Half a dozen officers had found seats there, and among them Georg von Dornburg. Captain van

der Laen, who had a brilliant career behind him, was relating in a loud voice his various experiences by land and sea. Colonel Mulder often interrupted him, after some story that seemed hard to believe, and recounted with an air of self-satisfaction some similar but utterly impossible adventure of his own. Captain van Duivenvoorde interposed soothingly when Van der Laen, who was conscious of never deviating far from the truth, angrily resented the older man's jest. Lieutenant Cromwell, a grave man with a round head and long, straight hair, who had come to Holland to fight for the Reformed faith, mingled but seldom in the conversation, and then with a few scarcely intelligible words in Dutch. Georg sat leaning far back in his chair, his legs stretched out before him and his eyes gazing vacantly into space.

Herr Aquanus went from one table to another and when he came at last to the one where the officers sat, he stopped before the Thuringian and said:

"Where are your thoughts straying, jonker? One would scarcely know you these last few days. What has come over you?"

Georg sat up quickly, stretched himself like one roused from sleep, and answered pleasantly:

"Idleness sets a man to dreaming."

"His cage here is growing too narrow for him," broke in Van der Laen. "If things go on like this much longer, we shall all have the staggers, like sheep."

"And we shall grow as stiff as the brass idol over on the shelf yonder," added Colonel Mulder.

"There was the same complaint during the first siege," answered the landlord, "but Herr von Noyelles drowned his discontent by emptying many a cask of my best wine."

"Tell the gentlemen how he paid you," cried Colonel Mulder.

"There hangs the paper framed and under glass," said Aquanus, laughing. "Instead of sending me money, he wrote me this:

"'Favors many, dear friend, hast thou done me,
For which good, hard coin thou gladly wouldst see,
But thou wilt find none in my pockets; so take in parting
In place of paltry coins
The finely written lines.
For in Leyden paper money's to be had for the asking.'"

"Admirable!" cried Jonker van Warmond, "and you yourself cut the die for the paper money."

"To be sure! Herr von Noyelles' idleness cost me dear. But this time you have already made two sallies."

"In heaven's name, be silent about the first fiasco!" cried Van Duivenvoorde. "A well-planned undertaking that failed miserably because the leader lay down to sleep like a mole! Was ever such a thing heard of before?"

"But the second had a better ending," said the landlord. "Three hundred hams, a hundred casks of beer, butter, ammunition, and added to that, the most despicable of all spies; a fine booty indeed."

"And yet it was a failure," cried Captain van der Laen. "We ought to have intercepted all the provision ships on Leyden Lake and brought them in! And the Kaag! That that fine fort on the island should be in the hands of the enemy!"

"But the men held it bravely," said Van Duivenvoorde.

"True dare-devils there were among them, too," said Van der Laen with a laugh. "One of them struck down a Spaniard, and, in the middle of the

fight, took off his victim's red hose and drew them on his own legs."

"I know the man," added the host. "Van Keulen is his name. There he sits yonder, over his beer, telling his companions funny tales. A fellow with a face like a satyr. But we do not lack consolation. Think of Chevraux's overthrow and the victory of the Beggars at Vlissingen on the Scheldt."

"And drink to Boisot, the brave admiral, and the valiant Beggar troops!" cried Captain van der Laen, clinking glasses with Colonel Mulder. The latter turned with uplifted glass toward the Thuringian, and, as the jonker, who had relapsed into his reverie, let the motion pass unheeded, the colonel cried sharply:

"Come, Herr von Dornburg, you take your time about responding to a pledge."

Georg started up and answered quickly:

"A pledge? Quite right. A pledge. I pledge you, colonel." With that, he raised the beaker, emptied it at a single draught, and placed it on the table again.

"Bravo!" cried the colonel, and Herr Aquanus said:

"He learned that at the university; study makes a man thirsty." As he said this, he cast a friendly but troubled glance at the young German. Then he looked toward the door, through which the musician Wilhelm had just entered. The host advanced to meet him and whispered:

"I am troubled about the young German nobleman. He has lost all his gayety. What is the matter with him?"

"Homesickness, no news from his family, and the snare into which the fortunes of war have led him in his pursuit of fame and glory. He will soon be himself again."

"I hope so," answered the host. "Such a healthy young tree quickly rebounds when it is bent to the ground; give the fine young fellow a helping hand."

Here a guest called to the landlord, and the musician joined the officers and began with Georg a low conversation that was drowned by the loud confusion of voices.

Wilhelm had come from the Van der Werff house. He had learned there that the next day but one, the fourteenth of June, would be the burgomaster's birthday. Adrian had told Henrika and she had told him. The master of the house was to be surprised with a song on the morning of his natal day.

"She will acquit herself admirably," interrupted Georg.

"She will not be alone; we can also count upon the burgomaster's wife. She objected strongly at first, but when I proposed a pretty madrigal, she consented to take the soprano."

"The soprano?" asked the jonker excitedly. "Of course I am at your service. Let us go; is the music at your house?"

"No, Herr von Dornburg, I have just taken it to the ladies; but to-morrow morning early——"

"We are to practice early to-morrow morning? That tankard is for me, Jungfer Dortchen! Your health, Colonel Mulder. Captain Duivenvoorde, here's to your new standard and to many a glorious ride at your side."

The young German's eyes shone once more with a joyous light, and, when Captain van der Laen went on with what he was saying, he exclaimed: "The Beggars of the Sea will yet break the Spanish power. Here's to the sea, gentlemen, the sea! It is best to leave all to chance. To board and capture

a ship by storm! To fight man to man, breast to breast on the decks of the enemy's ships! To fight and conquer or go down with the foe!"

"To your health, jonker!" cried the colonel. "*Donner und Wetter!* we have need of such young men!"

"You are yourself again," said Wilhelm, turning to his friend. "Drink to your dear ones at home."

"To the dear ones at home!" cried Georg. "To our fair mistress, to the joys and sorrows of love! War is joy, love is life! Let the wounds bleed, let the hearts break into a thousand pieces! Laurels grow on the battlefield, love weaves garlands of roses—roses with thorns, but roses nevertheless! Away with you! No one shall ever drink from you again!"

With flushed cheeks, Georg flung the goblet into one corner of the room, where it crashed into fragments. His companions applauded loudly, but Lieutenant Cromwell arose and quietly left the room, while the landlord thoughtfully shook his wise old head.

It seemed as though fire had been poured into Georg's soul and his spirit had gained wings. The heavy locks curled in disorder about his handsome head, as leaning far back in his chair, with doublet loosened, he joined in the others' sober talk with witty sallies and brilliant metaphors. Wilhelm listened half admiringly, half uneasily. A new day had long since dawned when the musician and his friend left the tavern. Colonel Mulder looked after the young German and cried to those who remained behind:

"That fellow has the devil in him."

The following morning, while the burgomaster was presiding over a meeting at the Rathhaus, the practicing of the madrigal took place. Georg stood

between Maria and Henrika. As long as the musician had errors to correct and repetitions to order, a spirit of merriment possessed the little choir, and more than once Barbara, in the adjoining room, heard sounds of innocent laughter; but when all had mastered their parts and the madrigal was sung without an error, the ladies grew more and more serious. Maria kept her gaze fixed upon the music, and never had her voice sounded so faultlessly pure, so full of feeling. Georg adapted his singing to hers and whenever he lifted his eyes from the notes, they rested upon her face. Henrika constantly sought to attract the jonker's glance, but always in vain. She wished to divert his attention from Maria and at the same time it pained her to remain unnoticed. She was seized with an impulse to outdo Maria, and the whole passionate depth of her nature sounded in her voice. Her ardor inspired the others. Maria's soprano rang out triumphantly above the young German's musical tenor and Henrika's deep voice took up the strain with fierce exultation. The musician rapturously beat the time, and carried away by the deep pathos of Henrika's voice, reveled in thoughts of her sister.

When the serenade had ended, he cried eagerly: "Once more!" The rivalry between the singers began afresh and with renewed vigor, and this time the jonker's burning eyes met Maria's. She lowered her music suddenly, stepped out of the half circle, and said:

"We know the madrigal. Come to-morrow morning early, Meister Wilhelm; my time is limited."

"Ah!" cried the musician regretfully. "You were doing so well and there were only a few more bars." But Maria was already at the door and answered only:

"Until to-morrow."

The musician enthusiastically expressed his appreciation of Henrika's singing; Georg politely did the same. When both had taken their departure, Henrika began to pace the room with rapid steps and struck her small hands passionately together.

On the birthday morning, the singers were ready betimes, but Peter had risen before sunrise to draw up, with Van Hout's aid, a motion that had to be completed before the meeting of the council. Nothing lay further from his thoughts than his birthday, and when the trio began in the dining-room, he knocked on the door and said:

"We are busy. Find another place for your singing."

The rendering of the madrigal was interrupted for a moment and Barbara cried:

"People don't think of fishing-nets when they are picking apples. He has forgotten all about his birthday. Send the children in to him first."

The burgomaster's wife entered the study with Adrian and Liesehen. They carried nosegays in their hands and Maria had dressed the little girl so daintily that, in her white frock, she looked like a veritable little elf.

Peter realized now what the singing had meant. He warmly drew the three well-wishers toward him, and when the madrigal began anew, he stood attentively before the trio. The rendering was not half as successful as at the rehearsal, for Maria sang in a low and muffled voice, and, in spite of Wilhelm's energetic beating of the time, the spirit and fervor of the preceding day would not return.

"Excellent, most excellent," said Peter when the singers paused. "Well conceived and executed; a delightful birthday surprise." Then he shook hands

with each with a few hearty words, and as he grasped the jonker's right hand, he said warmly: "You were sent us from the skies just at the right moment. A home in a strange land is always something, and you have found one with us."

Georg had cast down his eyes, but at the last words he raised them again and fixed them upon the burgomaster. How kindly and frankly the older man looked at him! A great emotion overcame him, and, without reflecting, without knowing what he did, he laid his hand on Peter's arm and his face upon his shoulder.

Van der Werff suffered him to do so, stroked the young man's hair, and said with a smile:

"Like Leonhard, wife, just like our Leonhard! We shall all meet again this noon. You, too, Van Hout, and do not forget your wife."

Maria arranged the seats at table so that she would not have to look at Georg. He was placed next to Frau van Hout and opposite Henrika and the musician. At first he was quiet and preoccupied. Henrika, however, gave him no peace, and when he had once begun to answer her questions, he was soon carried away by her feverish gayety and gave free rein to his wit. Henrika was not to be outdone, her eyes shone, and in the increasing pleasure of measuring her wit with his, she strove to surpass him in every jest and every retort. She drank no wine, but she was soon intoxicated by her own words and monopolized Georg so completely that he had no time to address a word to the other guests. Once when he tried to do so she interrupted him quickly and compelled him to turn to her again. This persistence annoyed the jonker, and, although he struggled against it, a spirit of wantonness awakened within him and he began to provoke Henrika into

making unwarrantable assertions and to contradict them with others equally unwarrantable.

Maria listened to Henrika with surprise, and there was something in Georg's bearing toward her friend that annoyed her. Peter took little notice of Henrika; he was talking with Van Hout about the three letters that had been received from Glippers, advising the surrender of the city, of the uncertain attitude of several members of the council, and the execution of the captured spy.

Wilhelm, to whom his neighbor had scarcely vouchsafed a word, was now following the conversation of the older men and observed that he had known the traitor. He was an innkeeper in whose tavern he had once met Herr Mantenesse van Wibisma.

"Ah, now we have it," interrupted Van Hout. "We found a note in Quatgelat's wallet and the writing looked suspiciously like the baron's. Quatgelat was to make inquiries as to the amount of provisions in Leyden."

"They are all alike," cried the burgomaster. "He could have carried only too welcome news to Valdez, unfortunately. The investigation has brought to light little that is cheering; to be sure, nothing certain has been ascertained yet."

"We ought to leave that to the women."

"The women?" asked Peter in astonishment.

"Yes, to us," cried Frau van Hout. "Why should we sit idle, when we can be of use?"

"Intrust the work to us," cried Maria. "We are as anxious as you to do something in the service of the great cause."

"And believe me," added Frau van Hout, "we shall gain admittance to storerooms and cellars much more readily than the constables and guards, whom the housewives fear."

"Women in the service of the city," said Peter thoughtfully. "To be frank—but your proposal is worthy of consideration. Fräulein Henrika is in high spirits to-day."

Maria looked indignantly at Henrika, who was leaning far across the table. She was showing Georg a ring.

"Don't you wish to know what it means," she exclaimed with a laugh. "Look, a snake biting its own tail."

"Aha!" returned the jonker, "the symbol of self-torment."

"Very good! But it has another meaning, too, and you would do well to take note of it, Sir Knight. Do you know the meaning of eternity and eternal constancy?"

"No, fräulein. I was not taught at Jena to think so deeply."

"Of course; your teachers were men. Men and constancy—eternal constancy!"

"Was Delilah, who betrayed Samson to the Philistines, a man or a woman?" asked Van Hout.

"She was a woman. The exception that proves the rule. Is it not so, Maria?"

The burgomaster's wife did not answer, but only nodded silently; then she impatiently pushed back her chair, and the meal was at an end.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Days and weeks had elapsed, July had been followed by a hot August, and this, too, was drawing to a close. The Spaniards still surrounded Leyden, and the city was now altogether like a prison. The soldiers and armed burghers performed their duties wearily and listlessly; at the Rathhaus there was enough to be done, but the work of the authorities was sad and disagreeable; for no encouraging message came from the prince or the Estates, and all that was to be discussed was relative to the increasing distress and the hideous follower of war, the plague, which made its entry into Leyden hand-in-hand with starvation. Moreover, the number of malcontents increased from week to week; the partisans of the old order of things raised their voices more and more loudly, and many a friend of liberty, who saw his dear ones pining away, joined the Spanish sympathizers, and demanded the surrender of the city. The children went to school and assembled on the playgrounds as usual, but there was rarely a sign of the joyous hilarity of former days. And what had become of the boys' red cheeks and the plump arms of the little girls? The poor drew their belts tighter, and the bit of bread that was apportioned to each by the city no longer sufficed to still hunger and support life.

Jonker Georg had been living for a long time in the burgomaster's house.

On the morning of the twenty-ninth of August

he was returning from a search for game; he carried a cross-bow in his hand and a bag slung over his shoulder. When he reached the house he did not go upstairs at once, but went to the kitchen where Barbara was. The widow received him with a friendly nod; her blue eyes were as bright as ever, but her round face had grown thinner, and there was a painful quiver about the sunken mouth.

"What do you bring to-day?" she asked the jonker.

Georg felt in the bag answered, smiling:

"A fat snipe and four larks; you know already."

"Poor sparrows! but what sort of a creature may this be? No head, no legs, and carefully picked. Jonker, jonker, it looks suspicious."

"It will look well in the pan, and the name matters not."

"But it does, it does; no one knows what it has fattened upon, and the good Lord did not make every creature for the human stomach."

"I have already told you what it is. It is a short-billed snipe, a corvus, a real corvus."

"Corvus! go along with you! I am afraid of the creature. The feather under the wing there—*Jesus Maria!* It cannot be a crow?"

"It is a corvus, as I have told you. Put the bird in vinegar and roast it with some herbs and it will taste like a real snipe. Wild ducks are not as plentiful as they were, and the sparrows are growing as rare as roses in winter. Every boy in the town is on the outlook with bow and arrow, and in the courtyards people are trying to catch them with sieves and lime twigs. They are almost exterminated, but now and then one makes its escape. How is the little elf?"

"Don't call her that!" cried the widow. "Give

her her Christian name. She's as white as this cloth and yesterday she refused the milk that we have procured for her every day at such sacrifices. God knows how it will end. Look at that cabbage-head. Half a stiver! And that miserable bone. It would have been too bad to give to a dog once—and now! The whole family must be satisfied with it. For supper we are to have ham-rind cooked in wine and a little flummery besides. And that for a giant like Peter! Where he gets his strength, God only knows. But he looks like a shadow of himself. Maria needs no more than a bird, but Adrian, poor lad, sometimes leaves the table in tears, and yet he has broken many a bit of bread from his thin slice for Lieschen; I know it. It is pitiful. And yet the proberb says: 'Cut your coat according to your cloth'—'Necessity knows no law,' and 'Waste not, want not.' Day before yesterday we gave again of what we still possess. To-morrow we must give up everything over and above what is needed for the next two weeks. Peter will not let us keep back as much as a bag of meal, and what is to happen then—merciful Heaven!" The widow sobbed aloud at the last words and went on tearfully: "And where do you get your strength? That miserable bit of meat is no more than a drop of water on a burning stone, to one of your age."

"Herr van Aken gives me, aside from my rations, what he can spare from his. I shall get through all right, but what horrors I saw to-day at the tailor's, who mends my clothes!"

"Well?"

"Two of his children have died of hunger."

"And at the weaver's opposite," added Barbara tearfully. "Such respectable people! The young wife was confined four days ago and this morning mother and child died of weakness—went out, I tell

you, like a candle that has burned down and must go out. At the clothmaker Petersohn's, the father and all five children have died of the plague. And if that doesn't wring one's heart——"

"Stop! stop!" said Georg, shuddering. "I must go to the courtyard for the drill."

"And of what good is that? The Spaniards will not attack us—they will leave the work to Grim Death. Your fencing makes the men hungry and the poor empty wretches can scarcely move their limbs."

"You are wrong, mother, wrong," answered Georg. "The exercise and motion will keep them up. When Herr von Nordwyk asked me to drill them in the place of the dead fencing-master, he knew what he was about."

"You are thinking of the plowshare that does not rust. Perhaps you are right; but before you go, take a swallow of wine. We still have plenty of that. If the men have something to do, at least they will not mutiny as the poor fellows among the volunteers did day before yesterday. Thank God, they are gone!"

While the widow was filling a glass, Wilhelm's mother entered the kitchen and greeted Barbara and the jonker. She carried a small bundle under her cloak and held it pressed close to her breast. Her breadth was still imposing enough, but the stoutness of which she had hitherto been so proud seemed to have become a burden.

Taking the package into her right hand, she said:

"Here is something for your Lieschen. My Wilhelm, the good lad——"

Here she stopped and thrust the present back into its old place. She had caught sight of the jonker's gift, and went on in another tone: "But I

see you have a pigeon already—so much the better! The clerk of the council's little one is also beginning to droop. Until to-morrow, if God wills."

She was about to go, but the jonker held her back and said: "You are mistaken, my dear madam. I shot that bird myself to-day, and I admit now, mother," turning to Barbara, "that my corvus is a miserable crow."

"Just what I thought," cried Barbara. "Such a horror!"

Yet she touched the bird's breast with her finger and said thoughtfully: "There's meat on the creature, though."

"A crow!" cried the collector's wife, clasping her hands. "To be sure, cats and dogs are already hanging on many a spit and have wandered into many a pan. There is the pigeon."

Barbara unwrapped the pigeon as carefully as though it might break under her fingers and looked at it lovingly as she weighed it in her hand. The musician's mother continued:

"It is the fourth he has killed and he says it was a good flyer. He intended it especially for your Lieschen. Stuff it nicely with yellow paste, not too firm and sweetened a trifle. That will be something to a child's taste. Take the little creature away. When one has known a thing it pains one to see it dead."

"God will reward you!" cried Barbara, pressing the good woman's hand. "Ah, these dreadful times!"

"There is always something to be thankful for."

"To be sure, it must be very much worse in hell," answered the widow.

"Don't be sacrilegious," said the older woman re-

provingly. "You have only one sick person in the house. Is Frau Maria to be seen?"

"She is in the workshops, distributing a little of our meat among the people. Are you running short of meal? Cows are still to be seen in the meadows, but the corn seems to have been swept away; there isn't a peck left in the market. Won't you take a swallow of wine, too, neighbor? Shall I call my sister-in-law?"

"I will look for her, myself. The greed of the market people is intolerable. We can do nothing more, but she will soon bring them to reason."

"The market people!" exclaimed the jonker.

"Yes, Herr von Dornburg, yes. You would not believe what the gentle little woman can do. Day before yesterday, when account was to be taken of the amount of provisions in every house, the people received the other ladies and me very sullenly, and many even showed us the door. But she went to the rudest of them, and as the waves of the sea opened before the people of Israel, the storerooms and cellars opened before her. How she does it, Heaven knows, but the people cannot resist her."

Georg drew a deep breath and left the kitchen. In the courtyard he found several city soldiers, volunteers, and members of the burgher guard, whom he was to drill in fencing. Van der Werff had placed his courtyard at their disposal, and there was certainly no man in Leyden who could better fill the place of the brave Allertssohn than the German.

Barbara had not been wrong. His pupils looked wasted and wretched enough, but many of them had learned in the dead captain's school to wield the sword skillfully, and their hearts were in their work.

In the middle of the courtyard was placed a figure stuffed with tow and covered with leather, with a piece of red paper in the shape of a heart on the left side. At this the most unskilled were to thrust in order to train hand and eye; the others placed themselves opposite each other in couples and fought a bloodless battle with blunt rapiers, under Georg's direction.

The jonker had felt very weak when he entered the kitchen, for the greater part of his ration of bread had remained with the tailor's family; but Barbara's wine had done him good and he pulled himself together and advanced briskly toward his pupils. His doublet was flung upon a bench, his belt was drawn tighter, and he soon stood before the soldiers in his white shirt sleeves.

At the sound of his first command, the window in Henrika's room was drawn sharply to. It had usually been opened when the exercises began and Henrika had not hesitated to clap her hands now and then and to call out a "bravo." But this was some time ago; for several weeks she had had neither word nor look for the young nobleman. She had never made such advances to any man and she would not have troubled herself so much to gain a prince's favor. And he? He had treated her coolly from the first and had avoided her more and more assiduously as time went on. Her pride was deeply wounded. Her purpose of drawing him away from Maria had long since been forgotten, and moreover, something—she knew not what—had come between her and the burgomaster's wife. Not a day passed but what she met the jonker and she rejoiced in it, because she could show him that she was indifferent to his presence, that it was even distasteful to her. Her imprisonment weighed heavily upon her, she longed unspeakably for the open air, the fields

and woods. But she never expressed a wish to leave Leyden, for—Georg was there, and her mind was full of him, waking or dreaming. She loved him one day, detested him the next, and both with the whole passion of her passionate heart. She thought often of her sister also, and said many prayers for her. That she might escape *ennui* and gain the favor of Heaven through good works, she helped the Gray Nuns, who lived in a little old convent near the Van der Werff house, to tend the sick whom they had tenderly taken in, and went with Sister Gonzaga to the houses of the Catholic burghers to collect alms for the little hospital. But all this she did without cheerful self-surrender, sometimes with overmuch zeal, again indifferently, and for days not at all. She had become sensitive in the extreme, and when she had been haughty to an unbearable degree one day, she would be sad and depressed the next, though without begging forgiveness from those whom she had wounded.

She was now standing behind the closed window, looking at Georg, who made a bold lunge at the leather figure and pierced the dummy's red heart.

The soldiers gave loud expression to their admiration. Henrika's eyes also had kindled with approval, but they suddenly lost their brightness, and she stepped back into the room as Maria came out of the workshops into the courtyard and passed the combatants with downcast eyes.

The young woman had grown paler, but her clear, blue eyes had gained a more confident expression. She had learned to rely upon herself and had sought and found arduous duties in the service of the city and of the poor. She had come out victorious in many a hard contest with her heart, but the struggle was not yet at an end; she was conscious of this whenever Georg's path crossed

hers. She avoided him as often as she could, for she did not conceal from herself that an attempt to associate with him as with a friend and brother would be the first step toward destruction for her and for him. He helped her honestly and with stern self-control. She was grateful for it, for she and her husband stood side by side upon the ship of life. She wished to have no other pilot; nay, the thought of perishing with him had no terrors for her. And yet, and yet! Georg was the loadstone mountain that drew her on and which she must avoid if she wished to save the vessel from destruction.

That day she had been questioning the different workmen about their condition and had listened to tales of the deepest misery.

The brave men knew that the surrender of the city might put an end to their sufferings, but they wished to hold out for the sake of freedom and their faith, and bore their misery as an unavoidable misfortune.

In the hall Maria came upon Wilhelm's mother and promised her to consult that very day with Frau van Hout concerning the greed of the market people. Then she betook herself to poor Liesehen, who was sitting, pale and listless, in her little chair. Her best doll had been lying untouched in her lap for an hour. The child's tiny hands were too weak to raise the toy. Trautchen brought in a glass of fresh milk. There was not yet an utter dearth of milk, for a goodly number of cows still grazed outside the city walls, under shelter of the cannon, but the child refused to drink and could only be induced, with tears, to swallow a few drops.

While Maria was pleading lovingly with the little one, Peter entered the room. This man, who was the ideal of a stately burgher, and who had always

bestowed much care upon his outward appearance, now looked uncared for. His brown hair hung down over his forehead, the thick, closely trimmed mustache now straggled sparsely over his cheeks, the doublet had grown too large, and the hose did not set smoothly as was their wont, but wrinkled on his powerful legs.

He greeted his wife with a careless wave of the hand, approached the child and stood gazing at her long in silence and with deep tenderness. The little one turned her sweet face toward him and tried to welcome him, but the smile died on her lips and she looked down listlessly at the doll again. He bent down to her, lifted her up, called her by name, and brushed her cheek with his lips. The child touched his beard lightly and then said faintly:

"Let me down, father, I am dizzy up here."

With moist eyes he set his darling carefully in her chair again. Then he left the room and returned to his study. Maria followed him and asked: "Nothing yet from the prince or the Estates?"

He shrugged his shoulders in silence.

"But they will not, they cannot forget us," cried Maria vehemently.

"We are perishing and they leave us to die," he said heavily.

"No, no, they have pierced the dykes; they will help us, I know it."

"When it is too late. One thing keeps piling upon another, misfortune follows misfortune; and upon whom fall the curses of the starving people? Upon me, me, me alone."

"You and the prince's commissioner stand together."

Peter smiled bitterly and said: "He took to his bed yesterday. The plague, Bontius says. I, I alone, bear the whole burden."

"We bear it with you," cried Maria. "First poverty and then hunger, as we promised."

"More than that. The last grain of wheat was baked to-day. There is an end of bread."

"We still have cattle and horses."

"We shall come to them day after to-morrow. It was decided to-day: two pounds, with the bones, for every four persons. Bread gone, cows gone, milk gone. What then? What will become of the mothers, the infants, and the sick? And our Lieschen!"

The burgomaster pressed his hands to his temples and groaned aloud. But Maria said: "Courage, Peter, courage. Hold fast to one thing, do not let one thing go—hope."

"Hope, hope!" he answered scornfully.

"To lose hope means to despair. To despair means to throw open the gates, to open the gates means——"

"Who thinks of opening the gates? Who speaks of surrender?" he interrupted angrily. "We will still stand firm. There is the portfolio, take it to the messenger."

CHAPTER XXIX.

Lieschen had eaten a piece of roast pigeon, the first morsel she had tasted for several days. There was as much rejoicing in the Van der Werff household as though some great good fortune had come to the family. Adrian ran to the workshops and told the workmen, Peter walked with a firmer step to the Rathhaus, and Maria took it upon herself to inform the collector's wife of the good effect of her son's gift.

The tears ran down the old woman's flabby cheeks at Maria's recital. She kissed the burgomaster's wife and cried:

"Ah, Wilhelm, Wilhelm! If he were only at home this moment. But I will call his father. *Mein Gott*, he is probably at the Rathhaus too. What did I hear then? Listen, Frau Maria, listen —what is that?"

The ringing of bells and the firing of cannon had interrupted the old woman's speech; she hurriedly flung open the window and cried:

"From the tower of Pancratius! It is not an alarm. Something good has happened. We need it indeed! Ulrich, Ulrich! Come back at once and bring us word. Dear Father in heaven! Dear Lord! Send succor. If it were only that!"

The women waited in great suspense. At last Wilhelm's brother Ulrich returned with the news that the messengers who had been sent to Delft had made their way back through the Spanish lines

and had brought with them a letter from the Estates. The clerk of the council had read it aloud from the window of the Rathhaus. The representatives of the country praised the behavior and fortitude of the burghers and informed them that the dykes had been pierced, regardless of the injury inflicted upon thousands of farmers.

Indeed the water was already advancing and the messengers themselves had seen the ships that were to bring relief to the city. The country surrounding Leyden must soon be flooded and the rising waters would force the Spanish to retire. "Better a ruined than a lost land," was the watchword that had been decisive in the carrying out of these extreme measures, and it was to be expected that those who had risked so much would shrink from no sacrifice to save Leyden.

The two women shook each other joyfully by the hand. The bells continued their jubilant clangor, and report after report of cannon resounded through the rattling windows.

When night began to fall Maria set out on her homeward way. It was long since her heart had been so light. The black placards on the plague-stricken houses seemed less mournful, the wasted faces less pitiable, for help was at hand for them. Faithful endurance was to be rewarded, the cause of liberty was to be triumphant!

She turned with rapid steps into the "Broad Street." Thousands of burghers had assembled there, to see, to hear, and to learn what was to be hoped or what was still to be feared. At the corners of the streets musicians were stationed, playing inspiriting airs, the Beggars' song mingled with the sound of pipe and trumpet, and the cheers of enthusiastic men. But there were crowds of well-dressed people, men and women, who scoffed aloud

at the music, and the simpletons who let themselves be duped by empty promises. Where was the succor? What could the handful of Beggars, which the prince could at best get together, do against the mighty army that surrounded Leyden? And the flooding of the country? The city lay too high for the water ever to reach it. The farmers had been injured without helping the burghers. There was but one means of salvation: to trust to the mercy of the king.

"What good has liberty done us?" cried a brewer, who, like all of his fraternity, had been forced to relinquish his grain and abandon the brewing of fresh beer. "What good will liberty do us when we are dead? Sensible men will go to the Rathhaus and demand surrender before it is too late."

"Surrender! The clemency of the king!" shouted some twenty burghers.

"Life comes first, and *then* the question whether we shall be independent or Spanish, Calvinist or Papist!" cried a master-weaver. "I will go with you to the Rathhaus."

"You are in the right, good people," said Burgomaster Baersdorp, who, wrapped in his costly, sable-trimmed mantle, had approached from the direction of the Rathhaus, and had overheard the last speaker's words. "But be advised! To-day the credulous are beginning to hope again, and the time for making your just demand felt is badly chosen. Wait a few days, and then, if succor does not come, present your petition. I will speak in your behalf, and with me many good men in the council. We have nothing but kindness and gentleness to expect from Valdez. To rise against the king was criminal from the first. To fight against famine, the plague, and death is madness and a sin. God be with you, my good people."

"The burgomaster speaks well," cried a cloth-dyer.

"Van Swieten and Norden think as he does, but Meister Peter rules by the prince's favor. If the Spaniards rescue us his neck will be in danger when they enter the city. It matters not who dies, so that he and his have plenty and live on the fat of the land."

"There goes his wife," said a master-weaver, pointing to Maria. "How happy she looks! The leather business must be doing well. Heh, Frau Bürgemeisterin! Heh! My compliments to your husband, and tell him that his life may be valuable, but ours are no wisps of straw, either."

"Tell him further," shouted a cattle-dealer, who seemed not to have suffered much as yet from the prevailing misery, "tell him the more cattle he kills the better, but Leyden burghers——"

The cattle-dealer did not bring his speech to an end, for Herr Aquanus had seen from the Angulus what was passing, and had stepped into the street and forced his way into the midst of the malcontents.

"For shame!" he cried. "To attack an honorable woman in the streets! Is this the way of Leyden burghers? Give me your hand, Frau Maria, and if I hear another angry word I will summon the constables. I know you! Near the Blue Stone still stands the gallows that Herr van Bronkhorst has had erected for such as you. Which of you wishes to make the first trial of it?"

The men to whom these words were addressed were not of the bravest, and not a word was spoken aloud as Aquanus conducted Maria to the tavern. The landlord's wife and daughter received her in their apartments, which were separated from the public rooms, and begged her to accept their hospitality until the crowd had dispersed. But Maria

was anxious to return home, and when she said that she must go, Aquanus offered her his escort.

Georg von Dornburg was standing in the hall as they passed and he drew back with a respectful salutation, but the landlord called to him and said:

"I shall have much to do to-day, for many a man will treat himself to a glass of wine after the good news. You will excuse me, Frau Bürgemeisterin, but the jonker will see you home as safely as I could—and you, Herr von Dornburg——"

"I am at your service," answered Georg, and accompanied Maria into the street.

Both walked on in silence for a time and it seemed to both as though they could hear the beating of each other's hearts. At last the jonker drew a long breath and said:

"Three long months have elapsed since I came. Have I been good, Maria?"

"Yes, Georg."

"But you cannot guess what it has cost me to keep my heart within bounds, to curb my tongue, and blind my eyes. I must say it once, Maria, once——"

"Never, never," she interrupted pleadingly. "I know that you have struggled honestly; do not spoil your victory now."

"Listen to me, Maria; only this once, listen to me!"

"What will it avail you to torture me with passionate words? I can hear words of love from but one man, and what I cannot hear, you must not say to me."

"No?" he asked reproachfully, and then went on heavily and bitterly: "You are right, entirely right. Even speech is denied me. My life must flow on like a leaden stream and all that grows and blossoms on its banks must remain scentless and color-

less. The golden sunlight has hidden itself behind clouds, all joy has died within me and all that once delighted me has become stale and lost its charm. Do you recognize the jovial young fellow of former years?"

"Try to recover your cheerfulness; try, for my sake."

"It is gone, gone," he murmured sadly. "You saw me in Delft, but you never really knew me. These eyes were like two magic mirrors in which every object is transformed. This heart then embraced the whole world, and how quickly and joyously it beat! Often I could not contain myself for very happiness, and it seemed as though I must fly to pieces like a rifle barrel that is overcharged. I felt it time and time again at Delft when you were kind to me. And now, now? I still have wings, I still might fly, but here I crawl along like a snail—for it is your wish."

"It is not my wish," answered Maria. "You are dear to me, I may admit so much—and it saddens me to see you so. But now—if you care for me, and I know that you do—cease to torture me so cruelly. You are dear to me. I have said so, and it must be said so, that all may be made clear between us. You are dear to me like the vanished days of my childhood, like a blissful dream, like a beautiful song in which we delight and which refreshes our souls when we hear it or remember it—but you are no more to me than that and can never be. You are dear to me and I wish you to remain so, and you can, if you do not break the vow that you have made."

"Vow?" asked Georg. "Vow?"

"Yes, vow," answered Maria, slackening her steps, "which you made on Peter's breast—on his birthday morning, after the song. You remember!

You registered a silent vow; I know it, I know it no less surely than that I vowed fidelity to my husband at the altar. If you can deny it, do so."

Georg shook his head and answered with increasing vehemence:

"You can read my very soul. Our hearts knew each other like two faithful friends, as the earth knows her moon and the moon her earth. What is one without the other? Why should they be separated? Have you ever walked along a forest road? The tracks of two wheels run side by side but never touch. The axle keeps them apart as our vows keep us."

"Say rather, our honor."

"As our honor. But in the forest one often comes upon a place where the road ends at a charcoal-kiln or a clearing, and there the tracks intersect each other, and in this hour I feel that my path has come to an end. I cannot go any further, or the horses will plunge madly into the thicket and the carriage be dashed to atoms against rocks and stones."

"And with it honor. Not another word. Let us walk more quickly. See the lights in the windows. All wish to show their joy at the good news, nor must our house remain in darkness."

"Do not hurry so. Barbara will see to it, and think how soon we must part. But you said that I was dear to you."

"Do not torture me!" cried the young wife imploringly.

"I do not wish to torture you, Maria, but you must listen to me. I was in earnest, in deadly earnest when I took that silent vow, and I have sought to free myself from it by death. You have heard how I rushed like a madman upon the Spaniards in the storming of the Boschhuizen forti-

fications, in July. Your token, the blue ribbon you gave me in Delft, fluttered from my shoulder as I dashed upon the swords and lances. But I was not to die and came out unharmed. Oh, Maria, for the sake of this vow, I have borne unheard-of tortures. Absolve me from it, let tell you once freely, only once——"

"Stop, Georg, stop," implored Maria. "I will not, must not hear you—neither to-day nor to-morrow—never, never, throughout all eternity."

"Once, only once, I will tell you that I love you, that I would give up my life and happiness, peace and honor——"

"Not another word, Jonker von Dornburg. There is our house. You are our guest and if you speak another such word to the wife of your friend——"

"Maria, Maria—oh, do not raise the knocker. How can you heartlessly destroy a man's whole happiness——"

The door had opened and the burgomaster's wife crossed the threshold. Georg stood opposite her, and, stretching out his hand beseechingly, said:

"You abandon me to despair and death! Maria, Maria, why do you treat me so?"

She placed her hand in his and said:

"That we may remain worthy of each other, Georg."

Then drawing her cold hand forcibly away, she entered the house: he, however, wandered for hours, like a drunken man, through the lighted streets, and flung himself at last with burning head upon his couch. On the table beside the bed lay a small, loosely bound book. He seized it and began to write with trembling fingers. The pen often hesitated, and the writer, sighing heavily, stared vacantly into space. At last he tossed the book aside and restlessly awaited the approach of dawn.

CHAPTER XXX.

Shortly after sunrise, Georg sprang from his couch, drew out his knapsack, and filled it with his few belongings. The book alone was not placed with the other articles.

In the early morning, Wilhelm entered the court-yard as the first workmen were on their way to the workshops. The jonker saw him coming and met him at the door.

The musician's face bore but slight evidences of the want that all hands endured, but his entire person trembled with excitement and he changed color from moment to moment as he breathlessly told Georg the object of his early visit.

Shortly after the arrival of the messengers from the Estates, a Spanish envoy had brought letters to Burgomaster van der Werff. One of the letters was from Jonker Nicolas van Wibisma and contained the news that Henrika's sister had reached Leyderdorp with Belotti and had found shelter in the farmhouse of the elder Freiherr van Wibisma. She was very ill and longed to see her sister. The burgomaster had delivered this letter to Henrika and Henrika had hastened at once to Wilhelm to request him to help her out of the city and to accompany her to the Spanish lines. Wilhelm was undergoing a hard struggle. No sacrifice seemed too great to enable him to see Anna again and what the messengers had succeeded in doing, he also might do. But could he abet the

flight of the young girl held as a hostage by the council, deceive the guards, desert his post?

Since Henrika's request that Georg should escort her sister from Lugano to Holland, the young German had been informed of the latter's history and was also aware of the state of Wilhelm's heart.

"I must, and yet I cannot," cried Wilhelm. "I have passed a dreadful night. Imagine yourself in my position, imagine yourself in the fräulein's."

"Obtain leave until to-morrow," said Georg decidedly. "As soon as it is dark I will accompany you and Henrika. She must swear to return to the city if it should come to a surrender. As for me, I am no longer bound by oath to the English standard. A month ago we were given the option of entering the service of the Netherlands. All that is needed is a word to Captain van der Laen and I am my own master."

"Thank you, thank you; but the fräulein forbade my asking for your assistance."

"Nonsense! I shall go with you and when we have reached our destination, I shall make my way to the Beggars. The council will not be sorry for our departure, for there will be two mouths the less in Leyden, when Henrika and I are gone. The sky is gray; we shall have a dark night, I hope. Captain van Duivenvoorde is in charge of the watch at the Hohenort Gate. He knows us both and will let us through. I will speak with him. Is the farmhouse in the village?"

"No, some distance outside, on the road to Leyden."

"Well, then, we will meet again at the inn at four."

"But the fräulein——"

"It will be time enough when she learns outside the gate who is to accompany her."

When Georg arrived at the inn at the appointed hour, he learned that Henrika had received another letter from Nicolas. It had been given to the outposts by the jonker himself and contained only the words: "Until midnight, the Spanish watchword is '*Lepanto.*' Your father shall learn to-day that Anna is here."

When the departure from the Hohenort Gate had been arranged for nine o'clock, Georg went to Captain van der Laen and Commandant van der Does and recived from the former the desired discharge and from Janus a letter to his friend, Admiral Boisot. When he announced to his men that he meant to leave the city and join the Beggars, they declared that they were ready to follow him and to live and die with him. It was with difficulty that he was able to restrain them. As he passed the Rathhaus, he slackened his steps. The burgomaster was always to be found there at that hour. Should he leave the city without bidding him farewell? No, no! And yet—since yesterday he had forfeited the right to look him frankly in the eye. He shrank from meeting him and it seemed to him as though they were wholly estranged. So Georg hurried by the Rathhaus and thought defiantly: "What if I do part from him without a farewell? I am indebted to him for nothing, for I shall have to pay for his kindness with suffering, perhaps with death. Maria loved me before she loved him, and what she is to me and was and will be, she shall know before I go."

At dusk he returned to his room, ordered the man-servant to carry his knapsack to Captain van Duivenvoorde at the guardroom at the Hohenort Gate, and then, with the little book thrust into his doublet, repaired to the other part of the house, to take leave of Maria.

He walked falteringly up the stairs and paused in the upper hall.

The throbbing of his heart took away his breath. He did not know at which door to knock and a torturing fear overcame him. For several moments he stood like one paralyzed, then he roused himself, gave himself a shake, and murmured: "You have turned coward." He opened the door that led to the dining room, and entered. Adrian was sitting at the empty table, studying by the light of a pine torch. Georg inquired for his mother.

"She is probably spinning in her room," answered the lad.

"Call her; I have something important to say to her."

Adrian left the room and returned with the message that the jonker should wait in his father's study.

"Where is Barbara?" asked Georg.

"With Lieschen."

The German nodded, and as he paced to and fro beside the table, he thought: "I cannot go like this! I must unburden my heart. I must hear once, only once that she loves me—I must—I must. It may be dishonorable, it may be despicable. I will atone for it; I will atone for it with my life."

While the jonker was pacing the room, Adrian gathered his books together and exclaimed: "B-r-r-r, jonker, how you look to-day! You frighten one. Mother is already in the study. I hear the rattling of the tinder-box; she is probably lighting the candles."

"Are you busy?" asked Georg.

"I have finished."

"Then run to Wilhelm Corneliussohn's and tell him that we shall meet at nine, at nine punctually, as was arranged."

"At the inn?" asked the boy.

"No, no, he knows already; hurry, youngster."

Adrian was about to go, but Georg beckoned to him and asked in a low voice:

"Can you keep silent?"

"As a fried sole."

"I am to leave the city to-night and may never return."

"You, jonker? To-night?" asked the boy.

"Yes, my dear lad. Come here and give me a farewell kiss. You shall keep this ring as a reminder of me."

The lad submitted to the kiss, placed the ring upon his finger, and asked with tearful eyes: "Are you in earnest? Ah, yes, the famine! I would go with you if it were not for Lieschen and mother. When will you come back?"

"Who can tell, my lad? Think of me kindly, do you hear? Kindly! And now go."

Adrian rushed down the stairs, and a few moments later the jonker was standing before Maria in Peter's room. The blinds were closed and the candelabrum on the table held two lighted candles.

"Thank you, thank you a thousand times for coming," said Georg. "You pronounced my sentence yesterday and to-day——"

"I know what brings you here," she answered gently. "Henrika has bidden me farewell and I ought not to keep her back. She does not wish you to accompany her, but Meister Wilhelm has told me all. You have come to say good-by.'"

"Yes, Maria, good-by forever."

"If God wills, we shall see each other again. I know what drives you away from here. You are good, noble, Georg, and if anything can lessen the pain of parting, it is this: we can think of each

other without grief or resentment. You will not forget us and—as you know—your memory will be cherished in the hearts of all here."

"And in yours too, Maria?"

"In mine too."

"Hold fast to it! And when the storm has swept from your path the poor dust that to-day lives and breathes, loves and despairs, grant it a place in your memory."

Maria shuddered, for he looked at her with a somber gleam of profound despair in his eyes, and, seized with keen apprehension, she cried: "What are you thinking of, Georg—for Christ's sake, what are you thinking of?"

"Nothing wrong, Maria, nothing wrong," he answered dully. "All men are not alike. He who can exist with sluggish blood from one decade to another in peace and honor is a fortunate man. My blood runs in a more rapid course. And what my eager soul has once clasped with its polypean arms, it does not relinquish until its death-knell sounds. I am going. I shall not return; but you and my love I shall take with me into battle, into the grave. I go——"

"Not like this, Georg; you must not go like this."

"Then say: 'Stay!' Then say: 'Here I am, and I pity you.' But do not encourage the poor wretch whom you have blinded to open his eyes and delight in the beauties of creation. There you stand trembling and quivering, and you have no word for him who loves you, for him—him——"

The young man's voice was choked by his deep emotion, and, sighing heavily, he pressed his hand to his forehead. Then he seemed to recollect himself, and went on sadly: "Here I stand to tell you one last time what is in my heart. You should hear

sweet words, but pain and sorrow would be mingled with all that I could say. Take this book. Whenever my heart dictated, I wrote in verse that for which harsh prose has no expression. Read these pages, Maria, and if they awaken an echo in your heart, keep them. The honeysuckle in your garden needs a support that it may grow and put forth flowers; let these poor verses be the prop about which your memory of me may entwine its tendrils and cling lovingly. Read, and then say once more: 'You are dear to me,' or send me from you."

"Give them to me," said Maria, and she opened the book with a throbbing heart.

He stepped back from her, but his breath came fast, and his eyes followed her as she read.

She began with the last poem but one. It had been written the previous day, shortly after Georg's return.

"Fröhlich ziehen sie dahin,
Lichter strahlen durch die Scheiben,
Und die Strassen auf und ab
Woght ein vielgeschäft'ges Treiben.
O, der frohen Festesnacht;
Wenn's doch ewig also bliebe!
Ewig! ewig? Arme Pracht!
Kurzes Leuchten, arme Liebe."

The last poem Georg had written with flying pen the night before. He bemoaned therein his sad lot. She must listen to him once, once, and then he would sing her an unequaled song. She had glanced over the first lines in silence, but then her lips began to move, and she read rapidly and in a low but audible voice:

"Bald sollt' es tönen wie des Donners Schallen,
Bald sanft und flötend durch die Mainacht wallen,
Bald würd's zum Himmel jubelfroh getragen
Und schluchzen bald wie Philomelens Klagen.

Und dieses Lied, es könnte nie verklingen,
Zum Ohr der ganzen Menschheit müsst' es dringen
Zur tiefsten Höhle, in die dunklen Grüfte,
Zum Aethermeer hoch uberm Reich der Lüfte,
Allüberall würd' dann mein Sang vernommen,
Die Schöpfung lauschte sehnsuchtsvoll beklommen
Und stimmte ein in vollen Jubelchören
Und bäte Dich, den Sänger zu erhören.
Und ob der Epheu längst mein Grab umschlänge,
Sie tönen fort die süssen Zauberklänge,
In aller Welt, durch alle Erdenzonen,
Gewaltig von Aeonen zur Aeonen!"

Her heart beat faster as she read and her breath came more and more rapidly, and when she reached the last lines, tears were in her eyes and she raised the book in both hands to fling it aside and to throw her arms about the writer's neck.

He had been standing spellbound before her, listening rapturously to the noble flight of his own words. Trembling with passion, he mastered himself until she had finished, until her eyes were lifted from his verses, and she had raised the book high in the air, then his self-control fled to the winds and, beside himself, he cried: "Maria, sweet, incomparable woman!"

"Woman! Wife?" echoed like a warning cry within her and an icy hand seemed to clutch at her heart. The delirium vanished, and when she saw him standing before her with glowing eyes and outstretched arms, she recoiled, and an intense horror of him and of her own weakness seized her, and, instead of flinging aside the book and running toward him, she tore it into two pieces and said proudly: "Here are your verses, Jonker von Dornburg; take them with you." Then, maintaining her dignity with an effort, she continued more gently: "I shall remember you without this book. We have both been dreaming; let us come to our

senses now. Farewell! I shall pray God to protect you. Give me your hand, Georg, and, when you return, we will bid you welcome to our house as a friend."

With that Maria turned away from the jonker and only nodded silently, when he called after her: 'Is it all, all over?"

CHAPTER XXXI.

Georg went down the stairs like one stunned. He had in his hand both halves of the book in which he had written a collection of poems to Maria from the time of the wedding in Delft.

The firelight from the kitchen illuminated the hall. He followed the light, and, before answering Barbara's friendly greeting, he approached the hearth and tossed the pages into the flames.

"Oho, jonker!" cried the widow. "A quick fire is not suited to every dish. What are you burning?"

"Senseless paper," he answered. "Don't be uneasy. At best it might weep and extinguish the flames. It will be ashes directly. There go the sparks in orderly rows through the black, charred pages. How pretty it looks! They come and go —like the torches of a funeral procession on a dark night. Sleep well, poor children—sleep well, dear verses. Look, mother! See them rolling up tightly, convulsively, as though it hurt them to burn."

"What nonsensical talk!" interrupted Barbara, pushing the charred book into the fire with the tongs, and, pointing to her own forehead, she continued warningly: "You make a body afraid for you at times. Lofty words like those in the Psalms are not for a kitchen and everyday life. If you belonged to me, I should give you a piece of my mind now and then. A steady gait brings one soonest to the goal."

"A good piece of advice for a traveler," answered Georg, holding out his hand to the widow. "Good-by, good mother. I can stand it here no longer. In half an hour I shall have turned my back upon this good city."

"Nonsense! how can you? Or is the fräulein going to take you in tow? A nobleman's son and a nobleman's daughter! Birds of a feather—but no; there has been nothing between you two. She is good at heart, but I should wish you some other wife than that Papist weather vane."

"Then Henrika has told you ——"

"She has just gone. *Mein Gott*—she has relations outside and we—it is hard to divide a plum into twelve pieces! I bade her godspeed cheerfully; but you, Georg, you——"

"I am to escort her out of the city and then—you will not blame me—then I shall make my way to the Beggars."

"To the Beggars! That is quite another thing, that is right of you! You will be in your element there! Be of good heart, jonker, and go forth boldly. Give me your hand, and if you meet my boy—he is in command of a ship of his own — *Mein Gott*, I have an idea! You can wait a moment longer. Trautchen, come here. Upstairs in the painted chest are the woolen stockings that I have knitted for him. Be quick and bring them! He may have use for them on the water in this damp fall weather. You shall take them with you."

"Willingly, most willingly, and let me thank you too for your kindness. You have been like a mother to me." Georg took the widow's hand in his and neither attempted to conceal the affection they had come to feel for each other, and their sorrow at parting. Trautchen had placed the woolen stockings in Barbara's hand and while the

latter was saying the last good-by to the jonker, many tears fell upon them. When Barbara saw that they were already wet before the first rain, she shook them in the air and gave them to the jonker.

The night was dark but still, sultry indeed. The travelers were received at the Hohenort Gate by Herr van Duivenvoorde. An old sergeant went before him with a lantern and opened the gate. The captain embraced his comrade, a few words of farewell and godspeed echoed from the walls, and the three were in the open.

For a time they walked in silence through the gloom. Wilhelm knew the way and walked ahead of the fräulein; the jonker kept close at her side.

All was still, save for the sound of a command from the walls, the striking of a clock, or the barking of a dog from time to time.

Henrika had recognized Georg in the light of the lantern, and, when Wilhelm stopped to see whether there was water in the ditch across which he intended to lead his companions, she said in a low voice:

"I had not counted upon your escort, jonker."

"I know it, but I too wished to leave the city."

"And wished to avail yourself of our knowledge of the password. Stay with us then."

"Until I know you to be in safety, fräulein."

"The walls of Leyden already lie between you and the danger from which you are fleeing."

"I do not understand you."

"So much the better."

Wilhelm turned and in a low voice besought his companions to keep silent. They went on without a word until, close by the camp, they reached the highroad, around which they had made a circuit.

A Spanish sentinel challenged them.

"*Lepanto*," was the answer.

They continued their way undisturbed through the midst of the camp. A four-horse coach, a box hung between two diminutive front wheels and a pair of monster hind wheels, drove slowly past them. It was conveying back to the Hague the daughter of a prominent Netherland official, Magdalena Moons, who had been paying a visit to her adorer and afterward husband, the commander-in-chief, Valdez. Henrika attracted no attention, for there were plenty of women in the camp. A few poverty-stricken creatures were seated before the tents, mending the soldiers' clothes. In front of an officer's tent some gaudily dressed wenches were drinking wine and throwing dice with their companions. Behind the commander's tent shone a brighter light. Here, under an awning, were placed a number of confessionals and an altar. Upon the latter candles were burning and above it hung a silver lamp. Around it pressed a dark and motionless throng — Castilian warriors, some of whom could be recognized when the lamp or candle-light touched their helmets or coats of mail.

The loud carousing of German mercenaries, the neighing and stamping of horses, the laughter of the officers and women drowned the low chanting of the priests and the murmur of those who were praying and confessing; but the sharp tinkle of the bell calling to mass rose from time to time with sharp insistence above the uproar of the camp. Close by Leyderdorp the password again proved effectual and they reached the first houses unmolested.

"Here we are," said Wilhelm, drawing a long breath. "Take advantage of the night, jonker, to leave the Spaniards far behind you."

"No, my friend: you are still here and I wish to

share your danger. I shall return to Leyden with you and then try to make my way to Delft; in the meantime I will remain on watch below, so as to warn you if need be."

"Let us part here, Georg; it may be hours before I return."

"I have time enough—too much time. I will wait. The door is being opened."

The jonker laid his hand on his sword, but his grasp soon relaxed, for it was Belotti who advanced toward them and saluted the signorina.

Henrika followed him into the house and conversed with him in a low tone until Georg addressed her.

"Fräulein van Hoogstraten, I would ask for a short godspeed."

"Farewell, Herr von Dornburg," she answered coldly, advancing a step toward him.

Georg also stepped forward and held out his hand. She hesitated an instant, then placed hers in it and said in so low a tone that he alone could hear her:

"Do you love Maria?"

"I am to confess then?"

"Do not refuse my last request as you did my first. If you can be magnanimous, answer without hesitation. I will betray your secret to no one. Do you love Frau van der Werff?"

"Yes, fräulein."

Henrika drew a long breath and then asked: "And you are going out into the world in order to forget her?"

"No, fräulein."

"Then tell me why you have fled from Leyden."

"To seek an end worthy of a soldier."

She came quite close to him and cried so scornfully that it cut Georg to the heart:

"You too, then! It seizes all: knights, maidens, wives, and widows; it spares none. There is no end to the misery. Farewell, Georg. We may laugh at each other or pity each other, just as the fancy takes us. A heart pierced with seven swords: what a delightful picture! Let us wear blood-red knots instead of green and blue! Give me your hand once more, and now, God go with you!"

Henrika beckoned to the musician and both followed Belotti up the steep, narrow stairs. Wilhelm remained behind in a small room. This adjoined a second, where a handsome three-year-old boy was waiting with an old Italian nurse. In a third room, which like all the others in the farmhouse was so low that a tall man could not stand upright, lay Henrika's sister, on a wide bedstead, above which a screen, resembling a flat canopy, was supported by four small columns. Pine torches dimly lighted the long, low room. The ruddy light of their broad flames was lost under the canopy, rendering the sufferer's face scarcely recognizable.

Henrika had given but a hurried greeting to the child and the nurse in the second room. She burst into the third with violent haste, ran to the bed, dropped upon her knees, threw her arms passionately about her sister, and covered her face with burning kisses.

She said nothing but "Anna" and the sufferer found no other word than "Henrika." Minutes passed. Then the girl sprang up, seized one of the burning torches, and let the light fall upon her sister's face. How pale, how wasted it was! But it was still beautiful, still as it used to be. A strange mingling of joy and pain filled Henrika's soul. What had been cold and hard in her grew warm again and melted, and the relief of tears so long denied her returned to her in this hour.

Little by little the flood of feeling began to ebb and the confused and broken words of endearment resolved themselves into questions and answers. When Anna learned that the musician had accompanied her sister, she expressed a wish to see him, and, as he entered, she stretched out both hands to him and cried:

"Meister, meister, in what a condition do you find me! See, Henrika, this is the best of men; the only disinterested friend I have found in the world."

The hours that followed were filled with painful emotions.

Belotti and the old Italian woman often undertook to speak for the sufferer and gradually unfolded before Henrika and Wilhelm the picture of a life shamefully ruined and worthy of a better fate. Anxiety, care, and agonizing doubt had from the first saddened Anna's life with the unscrupulous gambler and adventurer who had succeeded in ensnaring her inexperienced young heart. A brief period of intoxication was followed by a hideous awakening. Shortly after the birth of her child, Don Luis demanded that she should accompany him to the house of a marchesa of ill repute, in whose notorious gambling-rooms he had spent his evenings and nights for months. She had angrily refused to comply with his command, but he had coolly and threateningly persisted in his will. Then the Hoogstraten blood made itself felt and she fled secretly with her child to Lugano. There the boy had been received by her mother's former waiting-maid; she, however, had gone to Rome, not as an adventuress, but with a fixed and worthy purpose in view. She wished to develop her musical gifts to the full in the new schools of Palestrina and Nanini and enable herself to make her child independent of his father and of her people, who had cast her off. She was

risking much, but she had very positive hopes in view, for an eminent prelate and lover of music, to whom she had had letters of introduction from Brussels, and who was familiar with her voice, had promised upon her return from Rome to give her the position of instructor in singing to the young ladies of noble birth who were being educated in a convent at Milan. This convent was under his supervision, and the worthy man took care to provide Anna with letters to his friends in the eternal city.

Her sudden departure from Rome had been caused by the news that Don Luis had found his son and had carried him off. She could not lose her child, and, as she did not find him in Milan, she followed him and finally found him in Naples. There D'Avila gave her back her child after she had consented to make over to him the income which she still received from her aunt. The long journey, full of anxieties and difficulties, had exhausted her strength, and, sick and broken, she returned to Milan.

Her patron had taken care to keep the position of singing-teacher open for her, but she could only fill it for a short time, for her illness increased and a distressing cough ruined her voice. She turned once more to Lugano and tried there by the sale of her jewels to indemnify her honest friends, but the time soon came when she was forced to live upon the charity of a servant. Until the last six months she had not suffered actual want, but when her benefactor's husband died, there arose the anxiety about their daily bread, and a mother's love broke down Anna's pride; she wrote to her father as a repentant and heartbroken daughter, but she received no answer. At last, when starvation was staring her and her child in the face, the sick woman took

upon herself the hardest task of all and implored the man whom she could now regard with nothing but loathing and contempt not to let his own son grow up like a beggar's child. The letter containing this cry of despair had reached Don Luis in Holland, shortly before his death. There was no help to come from him. But Belotti appeared and now she was in her native land again, her friend and her sister were standing at her bedside, and Henrika encouraged her to hope for her father's forgiveness.

Midnight was past and Georg was still waiting for his friend's return. The noise and bustle of the camp were beginning to subside, and the lantern, which from the first had but feebly lighted the broad lower room of the farmhouse, was flickering more feebly still. The German shared the room with farming implements, harnesses, and heaped-up stores of grain and vegetables, but he lacked the inclination to cast even a glance at his bizarre surroundings. There was nothing cheering for him in the present or in the future. He felt humiliated, guilty, weary of life. His self-respect lay in the dust, love and happiness were lost by his own folly, before him lay nothing but a colorless and joyless future full of bitterness and torment. He wished for nothing but a speedy death. In the midst of this rose the pleasant picture of his home—but it vanished as soon as he remembered the dignified figure of the burgomaster, his own weakness, and the repulse he had received. He was filled with violent anger against himself and he longed with passionate impatience for the clash of swords and the roar of cannon, for desperate struggle man to man.

The time slipped by and he did not notice it, but a torturing desire for food began to torment the

hungry man. Turnips there were in plenty piled against the walls, and he devoured one after another until he felt the long unknown sensation of satiety. Then he seated himself on a kneading-trough and meditated as to how he was to make his way to the Beggars. He was unfamiliar with the road, but woe to those who ventured to interfere with him. His arm and his sword were good and there were Spaniards enough near at hand who might feel both. He began to grow impatient, and it was a welcome distraction when he heard steps approach and saw a man's figure entering the house. He had stationed himself against the wall, his sword resting in his crossed arms, and challenged the late-comer with a loud "halt."

The latter drew his sword at once, and, when Georg asked him authoritatively what he sought there, he answered in a boyish, but proud and undaunted voice:

"I would ask you that! I am in my father's house."

"Indeed!" smilingly answered the German, who in the feeble light of the lantern had recognized the speaker's figure. "Put up your sword again. If you are young Matenesse van Wibisma, you have nothing to fear from me."

"I am he. But what are you doing at night on our property with your sword under your arm?"

"I am warming the wall for my own pleasure, or, if you wish to hear the truth, I am keeping watch."

"In our house?"

"Yes, Herr Jonker. There is one upstairs with your cousin who would not wish to be surprised by a Spaniard. Go up without hesitation. I have heard from Captain van Duivenvoorde what a valiant lad you are."

"From Herr van Warmond?" asked Nicolas excitedly. "Tell me: what brings you here and who may you be?"

"One who is fighting for your freedom—a German, Georg von Dornburg."

"Then please wait here. I shall be back in a moment. Do you know whether Fräulein van Hoogstraten——"

"She is up there," answered Georg, pointing to the stairs.

Nicolas sprang up the staircase, called his cousin, and told her hurriedly that her father had had a severe fall from his horse while hunting and was lying ill. He had flown into a violent passion when Nicolas had spoken of Anna, but shortly after he had voluntarily requested Nicolas to tell him about her and had attempted to leave his bed and accompany him. He had succeeded in rising, but had fallen back fainting upon the couch. When his father came early the next morning, Nicolas went on, she was to tell him that he begged his forgiveness: he was about to do what he considered his duty.

He avoided Henrika's questions and only inquired hurriedly as to Anna's condition and about the Leydener of whom Georg had spoken.

When he heard Wilhelm's name, he begged Henrika to warn him to start as soon as possible and in his company. Then he hastily took leave of her and ran down the stairs.

Wilhelm soon followed him. Henrika accompanied him to the stairs to see Georg once more, but as soon as she heard his voice she turned defiantly and went back to her sister.

The musician found Jonker von Dornburg in eager conversation with Nicolas.

"No, no, my lad," the German was saying earnestly, "my way cannot be yours."

"I am seventeen."

"It is not that, it is not that. You confronted me bravely awhile ago and you have a man's strength of will—but life will bear many flowers for you yet, fair ones, God grant—you are starting out to win with your sword for yourself and your country a worthy lot in freedom and prosperity—but I—give me your hand and promise me——"

"My hand? There it is; but I must refuse you the promise. With you or without you, I am going to the Beggars."

Georg looked approvingly at the lad and asked gently:

"Is your mother living?"

"No."

"Then come. Doubtless we shall both find what we seek, with the Beggars."

Nicolas grasped the hand that Georg extended, and Wilhelm approached the jonker and said:

"I expected this of you when I saw you at St. Peter's Church and at Quatgelat's tavern."

"You were the first to open my eyes," cried Nicolas. "Come now, we will go directly through the camp; they all know me."

The boy kept close to the jonker on the road, and in answer to Georg's remark that he was placing himself in an unfortunate position toward his father, replied:

"I know it and it makes me so unhappy, so unhappy. But I cannot help it. I cannot let the reproach 'traitor' remain upon our name."

"Your cousin Matenesse, Herr von Rivière, is also devoted to the good cause."

"But my father thinks otherwise. He has the courage to expect good from the Spaniards. From the Spaniards! I have come to know them in these months. A brave Leyden lad—you will know

him by his nickname of 'Löwing,' which he truly deserved—was captured by them in a fair fight; and then—it still makes me shudder when I think of it—they hung him up with his head downward and tortured him to death. I was there, and not a word of what they said escaped me. If they had their way, all Holland should share the same fate. And such remarks are heard every day. No insult is too deep for us, and the king thinks as his soldiers do. Let who will be the slave of a master who oppresses and despises us! My holy religion is eternal and indestructible. I do not care whether it is hateful to many of the Beggars, if they will only help to break the Spanish chains."

Talking thus, they walked through the Spanish camp, now buried in slumber. Then they came to the German quarters, where carousing was still going on before many a tent. At the outer edge of the camp a sutler and his wife were packing up their remaining wares.

Wilhelm had walked in silence behind the other two, for his heart was deeply stirred, and pain and joy were deeply struggling for the mastery. He was inspired with pure and noble thoughts; but suddenly he stopped before the sutler's stand, and stretched out his hand toward the bread that was gradually disappearing into a chest.

Hunger had become a stern, only too stern a power in the city yonder, and it was not at all astonishing that Wilhelm approached the sutler, and, with sparkling eyes, purchased all the ham and bread there was left.

Nicolas laughed at the package that he carried under his arm, but Georg said:

"You have not looked want in the face yet, jonker. This bread is medicine for the most terrible disease."

At the Hohenort Gate, Georg caused Captain van Warmond to be roused, and presented Nicolas to him as a future Beggar. The captain congratulated the lad, and offered him money to provide himself in Delft with whatever he needed, and to defray his expenses during the first few weeks. Nicolas, however, refused the offer, for a purse full of gold pieces hung at his belt. A dealer in precious stones in the Hague had given them to him the day before for old Fräulein van Hoogstraten's emerald ring.

Nicolas showed his treasure to the captain, and then cried:

"Forward, now, Jonker von Dornburg. I know where we shall find the Beggars. And you, Captain van Duivenvoorde, tell the burgomaster and Janus Dousa what I have become."

CHAPTER XXXII.

A WEEK had elapsed since Henrika's flight and with it a succession of days fraught with privation. Maria had learned from the musician that young Matenesse had followed Georg and that both were on their way to the Beggars. It was as it should be. The leaping brook belonged to the wild, rushing, mighty river. She wished him safety, success, and happiness; but—strange—since the hour in which she had torn his book asunder, the recollection of him had become as vague as in the days before the Spaniards' arrival. Yes, after the hard-won victory over herself and after his departure a rare spirit of happiness had come over the young wife. She had been hard toward herself, and the inner light of the pure diamond only shines in its true brilliancy after it has borne the torture of the cutter's tool. She now recognized with joyful gratitude that she could look, unafraid, into Peter's eyes, love him, and require love in return. Under the burden of his cares, he seemed scarcely to notice her and her doings, but she felt none the less that he was pleased by much that she said and did for him. The young wife did not suffer to any extent under the protracted famine, while it told upon Barbara and weakened her strong frame. She often grew despairing before the cold hearth and the empty pots and pans and no longer considered it worth while to flute her great cap and neck-ruff. It was now for Maria to encourage her and to re-

mind her of her son, the Beggar captain, who would soon enter Leyden with the rescuing army.

On the sixth of September, the burgomaster's wife was returning home from an early walk. An autumn mist darkened the air and the wind from the sea drove a fine, drizzling rain through the streets. The dripping trees had long been robbed of their leaves, but not by wind and weather, but by children and adults who had prized this food for insects as a precious vegetable.

Near the Schagensteg, Maria caught sight of Adrian and hurried to overtake him. The boy was walking listlessly along and counting aloud to himself. Maria called to him and asked him why he was not at school and what he was doing.

"I am counting," was the answer. "That makes nine."

"Nine?"

"Nine bodies that I have met; the rector sent us all home. Master Dirks is dead and there were only thirteen of us to-day. There, they bring another one."

Maria drew her cloak closer together and walked on. A tall, narrow house lay at her left. A cobbler lived there, a jovial fellow over whose door two inscriptions were to be read. One ran as follows:

> "Here are shoes of every kind,
> Round above and flat below;
> If David's foot they do not suit,
> Goliath's foot they'll fit, I know."

And the other:

> "When the Israelites wandered through the desert,
> Full forty years their shoes they wore.
> If such were still the custom pleasant,
> Apprentice would ne'er seek cobbler's door."

On the ridge of the tall house stood the stork's

nest. It was empty. The red-billed visitors were not in the habit of setting out on their journey to the south so early, and some were still standing, in apparent meditation, on the roofs of Leyden. What had become of the cobbler's friendly guests? At noon, the day before, their host, who was accustomed in March to secure with his own hand the fortune-bringing nest, had crept upon the roof and shot down with his cross-bow first the female and then the male, as he was returning to his nest. It had been hard enough for him to do this and his wife had wept in the kitchen while the evil deed was being done, but when starvation is at the door and one sees one's dear ones dying, one does not think of old affections and future happiness, but seeks salvation for to-day.

The storks had been sacrified too late, for the cobbler's son, his growing apprentice, had, on that night, closed his eyes forever. Loud lamentations reached Maria through the open door of the shop and Adrian said: "Jacob is dead and Mabel is dying. The cobbler cursed me this morning on father's account. It was his fault, he said, if we all went to destruction. Is there no bread again to-day, mother? Bärbel still has some biscuit left and I feel so sick. I cannot swallow any more of that everlasting meat."

"Perhaps we can find a slice for you to-day. We must be sparing of bread, child."

In the hall of her house, Maria found a servant clad in black. He had come to announce the death of Commissioner Dietrich van Bronkhorst. On the evening of the previous day, Sunday, death had cut short this strong man's life.

Maria already knew of this heavy loss, which placed upon her husband's shoulders the entire responsibility of all that was to happen. She had

also learned that a letter had been received from Commander-in-chief Valdez, and in this letter Valdez had pledged his word as a nobleman to spare the city if it surrendered to the "clemency" of the king, and to grant to her husband, Herr van der Does, and the other leaders of the rebellion, safe conduct through the Spanish lines. The Spaniards should be withdrawn and Leyden garrisoned with only a few German troops. He invited Van der Werff and the Seigneur of Nordwyk to Leyderdorp as intermediaries and promised to send them home under a safe escort, even if the negotiations failed. Finally Maria knew that her husband had summoned for that day a great meeting of the council, the aldermen, and the principal men in the city, as well as the captains of the burgher-guard—but not a word of all this had come to her ears through Peter himself. She had learned it all from Frau van Hout and the wives of other burghers.

A great change had taken place in her husband within the last few days. He came and went, pale and gloomy. Silent and consumed by care, he kept aloof from his own family. He repulsed his wife curtly and impatiently whenever, following the impulse of her heart, she approached him with words of encouragement. Night brought him no sleep and he left his bed before morning dawned, to wander restlessly up and down, or look at Lieschen, who would only show by a faint smile that she recognized him.

When Maria reached home, she went at once to the child and found Doctor Bontius with her. He shook his head as Maria entered, and said that it would soon be over with the frail little thing. Her stomach had been injured during the first months of want and it now refused to act, and it would be folly to hope for recovery.

"She must live, she must not die," cried Maria wildly, and yet hopefully, like a true mother who cannot grasp the thought that she can lose her child, even when the little heart ceases to beat and the bright eyes grow dim and close. "Lieschen, Lieschen, look at me! Lieschen, drink this nice milk. Only a few drops! Lieschen, Lieschen, you must not die!"

Peter had entered the room unnoticed and had heard the last words. With bated breath he looked down at his darling, and his broad shoulders shook as he said to the doctor in a stifled, faltering voice: "Must she die?"

"Yes, I fear so! Bear up, old friend! There is still much left you. The Van Loos have lost all five by the plague."

Peter shuddered, and, without noticing Maria, left the room with bowed head.

Bontius followed him to his study, laid his hand on his arm, and said:

"Our short span of life is made bitter for us, Peter. Barbara tells me that they laid a body at your door early this morning."

"Yes. When I went out, I was greeted by the ghastly face. It was the body of a young man. They hold me responsible for all whom death cuts down. Look where one will—bodies! Go where one will—curses! Have I authority over so many lives? Day and night, nothing but death and misery before my eyes; and yet, yet, yet—my God! save me from madness!"

Peter clasped his forehead with both hands; but Bontius had no word of consolation for him and cried:

"And I, and I? My wife and the little one are down with fever, I on my feet day and night, not to cure, but to see people die. All that a man has

learned by hard study becomes child's play at such a time, and yet the poor wretches give a sigh of hope when I feel their pulses. But things cannot go on like this, they cannot. Seventy deaths day before yesterday, yesterday eighty-six, and among them two of my colleagues."

"And no prospect of improvement?"

"To-morrow the ninety will swell to a hundred, the one before the hundred will be changed to two and three and four and five—until at last there will be one man left whom there will be no one to bury."

"The infected houses are isolated and we still have cattle and horses."

"But the pestilence creeps out through the cracks, and since the last loaf of bread and the last malt cake was distributed and the people have to live upon meat, meat, and nothing but meat—a miserable little piece for the whole day—disease piles upon disease in forms that were never heard of and for which no remedies have been discovered. This drawing water with a bottomless jug is beginning to be too much for me. My brain is no stronger than yours. Until to-morrow."

"To-day, to-day! You will be at the meeting at the Rathhaus?"

"Certainly not! Do what you can answer for; I must pursue my calling—which now means to close men's eyes and to hold post-mortem examinations. If this goes on much longer practice will soon be at a standstill."

"In short: in my place, you would treat with Valdez?"

"In your place? I am not you: I am a doctor who has nothing to do but to enter the lists against suffering and death. Since Bronkhorst's death you are the providence of the city. Add to the meat a

piece of bread, if only as big as half my hand, or—I love freedom and my country as well as any man —or——"

"Or?"

"Or—leave death to reap his harvest; you are no doctor."

Bontius saluted his friend and left him. Peter, however, passed his hand through his hair and stood staring out of the window until Barbara entered with his robes of office, and, after placing them on a chair, asked with feigned composure:

"May I give Adrian some of the last biscuit? Meat sickens him. He is lying on his bed, writhing with pain."

Peter grew pale and said dully:

"Let him have it and send for the doctor."

"Maria and Bontius are already with him."

The burgomaster changed his dress, and he did so with hatred of every article he put on. The imposing robes were as hateful to him to-day as the office that gave him the right to wear them and which, until a few weeks before, he had filled with joyful confidence in himself.

Before he left the house, he went to Adrian. The boy was lying in Barbara's room, complaining of violent pains and asking whether he too must die now. Peter shook his head, but Maria kissed the lad and cried:

"No, no, of course you are not going to die."

The burgomaster's time was short. His wife tried to stop him in the hall, but he hurried down the stairs without hearing what she called after him.

Maria returned to Adrian's bedside. As she sat holding his moist hand in hers, she thought fearfully of the boy's comrades who had died so suddenly. She thought of Lieschen, she pictured

Peter at the meeting and heard his powerful voice contending for resistance to the last pound of meat and to the last man; yes, she might place herself at his side, for she knew what was to come, to endure, to endure to the end for freedom's sake, and, if God so willed it, to die a martyr's death, as Jacoba and Leonhard and Peter's noble father had done.

One anxious hour followed another.

When Adrian began to feel better, she went to Lieschen, who, pale and listless, seemed to be drifting toward death and only raised her tiny finger now and then to play with her parched lips.

Ah, the sweet human flower that was fading away! How closely the child had twined herself about Maria's heart, how impossible it seemed to give her up! With tearful eyes, she leaned her forehead upon her clasped hand, which rested on the head-board of the little bed, and passionately prayed to God to spare this child. She repeated the prayer again and again, but when the dim gaze no longer met hers and her hands fell back into her lap, she thought of Peter, the meeting, the fate of the city, and the words: "Leyden saved, Holland saved! Leyden lost, all lost!"

So the hours passed, until the gloomy day was succeeded by twilight and the twilight by evening. Trautchen brought the candles, and, at last, Peter's steps sounded upon the stairs.

It must be he and yet it could not be, for never had he come upstairs so slowly, so heavily.

Then the door of the study opened.

It was he.

What could have happened to him, what had the burghers decided?

With an anxious heart she bade Trautchen remain with the child, and then she went to her husband.

Peter was sitting before his desk, clad in his official robes, his hat still on his head. His face was buried in his folded arms.

He saw nothing, heard nothing, and when she spoke to him at last, he sprang up and flung his hat violently upon the table. His hair was disordered, his glance unsteady, and, in the faint light of the flickering candles, his cheeks looked ashen.

"What do you want?" he asked shortly and in a harsh voice, but Maria did not answer him at once. Dread had paralyzed her tongue.

She found words at last, and there was keen apprehension in her question:

"What has happened?"

"The beginning of the end," he answered dully.

"They overruled you?" cried Maria. "Baersdorp and the other cowards wish to parley?"

He drew himself erect and cried in a loud and threatening tone:

"Be careful of your tongue. He who remains steadfast until his children die and corpses block the way before his very door, he who is answerable for a thousand deaths, who for long weeks has borne revilings and curses, who for more than four months has hoped in vain for rescue—who, wherever he may look, sees nothing but unparalleled, ever-increasing misery, and then no longer thrusts aside the enemy's rescuing hand——"

"Is a coward, a traitor, and breaks the solemn oath that he has made."

"Maria," thundered Peter, approaching her with threatening looks.

Breathing quickly and with her figure drawn up to its full height, she awaited him, and, pointing at him, cried with a sharp tone in her trembling voice:

"You, you have sided with the Baersdorps, you,

Peter van der Werff! You have done this thing, you, the friend of the prince, the mainstay and protector of this noble city, you, the man who administered the oath to the burghers, the son of a martyr, the champion of liberty——"

"No more!" he interrupted, quivering with shame and emotion. "Do you know what it means to bear before God and mankind the blame of all this awful misery?"

"Yes, yes, a thousand times yes; it means to place one's heart upon the rack to save Holland. That is what it means. My God, my God! You are lost! You are treating with Valdez!"

"And if I am?" asked the burgomaster, raising his hand with an angry gesture.

She looked him steadily in the eye and said resolutely:

"Then it is my turn to say: Go to Delft; we have need of other men here."

He grew white and looked down at the floor as she confronted him with fearless bearing.

The light fell full upon her glowing face, and, when he raised his eyes to hers again, it seemed to him that standing before him was the same Maria who had vowed at the altar to share want and danger with him and to remain at his side, steadfast to the end in the cause of freedom; he felt that his "child" Maria had grown to his own height and passed him; he recognized, for the first time, in the proud woman before him his companion in conflict, the noble-minded comrade in danger and distress. A longing, stronger and more overpowering than he had ever felt before, surged up in him and drove him to her and found expression in the words:

"Maria, Maria, my wife, my guardian angel! We have written to Valdez, but there is still time.

Nothing binds me as yet, and with you, with you, I will remain faithful to the end."

She cried aloud in the fullness of this new, unexpected, unspeakable happiness, and, running to his arms, exclaimed:

"With you, one with you—always, until death, in conflict and in love!"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Peter was animated with fresh hope. Courage and enthusiasm stirred in his breast, constantly inspired as he was by the confidence of the brave woman at his side.

Under the pressure of the terrible responsibility that he bore, and importuned by his fellow magistrates, he had consented at the meeting to write to Valdez and beg for safe conduct for envoys who should appeal to the Estates and the prince to absolve the stricken city from its oath.

Valdez made every effort to induce the burgomaster to enter into further negotiations, but the latter stood firm and no request for release from the sacred duty of resistance went out from the city. The Seigneurs van der Does, the clerk of the council, Jonker van Warmond, and other resolute men, who had already protested in the great assembly against any dealings with the enemy, sided with him stoutly against his colleagues and the council, which, with the exception of seven members, insisted obstinately and vehemently upon the opening of negotiations.

Adrian recovered rapidly, but Doctor Bontius' prophecy was hideously fulfilled, for famine and the plague vied with each other in cruel fury and carried off almost half of the inhabitants of the city. Impenetrable was the gloom and dark the sky, yet in the midst of the awful distress there was many an hour when the sunshine filled all souls and hope unfurled

her green standard. More radiant than a bride roused on her wedding morning by the songs of her companions, did the Leyden burghers rise from their beds, when on the morning of the eleventh of September loud and long-sustained booming of cannon was heard from the distance, and the skies were dyed crimson. The villages to the southwest of the city were in flames. Every house, every granary that was reduced to ashes and buried the fortunes of honest men, was a beacon of hope to the despairing burghers.

The Beggars were on their way!

There, where the cannons thundered and the horizon was crimsoned, lay the land-scheiding, the bulwark which for centuries had faithfully protected the plains of Leyden against the onset of the waves and now blocked the advance of the rescuing ships.

"Fall, sheltering walls; rise, tempest; swallow thy prey, raging sea; destroy the wealth of the farmers, devastate our fields and meadows, but drown the enemy, or drive him hence." Thus sang Janus Dousa, and the words found an echo in Peter's soul; thus prayed Maria and with her thousands of men and women.

But the glow on the horizon died away, the report of cannon was silenced. A second day passed, a third and fourth, and no messenger arrived, no Beggar ship appeared, and the sea seemed to lie motionless; but another terrible power increased and moved with secret, stealthy, irresistible might: Death, with his pale companions, Starvation and Despair.

The dead were buried by their friends under cover of night, in order to retain the small portion of food allotted to them. From house to house sped the angel of death and he came to Lieschen also, and, in the silent night, kissed her closed eyes as she slept.

The Spanish sympathizers and the faint-hearted raised their heads again and formed into bands and even forced their way into the Rathhaus to demand bread. But there was not a crumb to be had and the authorities had nothing to distribute but a small portion of beef and horse flesh and chopped and salted hides.

During this period of deepest privation, Van der Werff was walking down the "broad street." He paid no heed to a crowd of desperate men and women who were following him with threats, but as he was about to turn into Van Hout's house he suddenly found himself surrounded. A pallid woman with her dying child in her arms fell on her knees before him, and, holding up the dying infant, cried in hollow tones: "Let this be enough, let it be enough; it is the third. Let it be enough!"

"Enough, enough! Bread, bread! Give us bread!" was shouted on every side, and stones and weapons were raised threateningly; a carpenter, whom he knew, and who had hitherto remained faithful to the good cause, came nearer to him and said quietly: "We can go on no longer. We have borne hunger and suffering patiently for the sake of our Bibles, but it is madness to fight against certain death."

Pale and shaken, Peter looked at the mother, the child, the brave workman, and the threatening, shrieking wretches. The same misery that crushed them and so many other starving people, oppressed his soul a thousandfold. His heart overflowed with compassion. He longed to take them all to his arms as brothers in misfortune, companions in a future and more worthy existence. With deep emotion, he looked from one to another. Then he pressed his hands to his breast and cried to the mob that surrounded him:

"Here I stand. I have sworn to remain steadfast to the end; and you swore to do so with me. I will not break my oath, but I can die. If my life can serve you, here I stand. Bread I have none, but here is my body. Take it; lay hands on me and tear me to pieces. Here I stand. I will keep my oath!"

The carpenter bowed his head and said dully: "Come, friends, as God wills; we have sworn."

The burgomaster quietly entered his friend's house. Frau van Hout had seen and heard all, and that very day she told Maria of what had taken place, and her eyes sparkled as she cried: "I never saw a man as noble as he was in that hour! It is well for us that he rules within our walls. Our children and our children's children will never forget what he has done."

Nor have they ceased to hold him in loving remembrance. Upon the night of the day on which the burgomaster bore himself so manfully came a letter from the prince, full of glad and encouraging news. He had recovered his health, and was making every effort to save the good city of Leyden. The Beggars had pierced the land-scheiding; their ships were advancing; help was at hand; and the faithful burgher who had brought the letter had seen with his own eyes the rescuing fleet and the champions of freedom glowing with the desire for battle. The Seigneurs van der Does were appointed the prince's commissioners in the place of Van Bronkhorst. Van der Werff no longer stood alone; and when, on the following morning, "Father William's" letter was read aloud and the messenger's report spread abroad, the courage and confidence of the tortured burghers rose like withering grass after a refreshing rain.

But weeks of anxiety and suffering still lay before them.

The last of September they were forced to slaughter the milch cows that had been spared for the infants and mothers; and then—then?

Help was near, for the skies were often reddened and the air was shaken by the roar of distant cannon; but the east wind held and drove back the advancing waters, and the ships needed a steadily mounting tide in order to reach the city.

None of the messengers who had been sent out returned; nothing was certain but the intolerable, ever-increasing suffering. Barbara had now taken to her bed, and complained of weakness and repugnance for food.

Maria remembered the roast pigeon, which had done poor little Lieschen so much good, and she went to the musician to ask him whether he could bring himself to sacrifice one more of his pets for her sister-in-law.

Wilhelm's mother received Maria. She was sitting, listless and feeble, in an easy-chair. She could still walk, but a strange trembling, caused by anxiety and distress, had affected her hands. She shook her head at Maria's request, and said: "Ask him yourself. He has to keep the little creatures shut up, for whenever they show themselves they are shot by the starving people. There are but three left. The others were taken by the messengers, and they have not returned. God be praised for it! The little food Wilhelm still has left for them will do more good in our stomachs than in their crops. Would you believe it? Two weeks ago he gave fifty gulden from his savings for half a bag of peas, and God knows where he found even that. Ullrich, Ullrich! Take the Frau Bürgemeisterin up to Wilhelm. I would like to spare you the climb, but he is waiting for the pigeons that were sent out, and he does not even come down for his meals. *Lieber Gott!* It isn't worth the trouble!"

The day was clear and sunny. Wilhelm was standing in his balcony and gazing toward the south across the green plain that lay outstretched below him. Behind him sat Andreas, the fencing-master's fatherless boy, writing music, but his attention was not fixed on his work and as soon as he had finished a line he too gazed into the distance, watching for the pigeon whose return his master was expecting. He did not look especially wasted, for many a grain of the pigeons' food had been added secretly to his small ration of meat.

Wilhelm showed how surprised and honored he was by the visit of the burgomaster's wife and promised to accede to her request, but it was plain that this consent was not easy for him to give.

Maria stepped out upon the balcony with him and he showed her in the south, where usually nothing but green met the eye, a wide surface, above which hung a thin mist. The afternoon sun seemed to steep the white vapor with light and entice it upward by its burning rays. This was the water flowing in through the pierced dykes, and the long, black lines that were moving at its edge must be the Spanish troops and herds of cattle retreating before the advancing flood, from the outer forts, villages, and hamlets. The land-scheiding itself was not visible, but the Beggars had long since passed it. If the fleet succeeded in reaching the Zoetermeer Lake, and from there——

Wilhelm was suddenly interrupted in his explanations, for Andreas had sprung up, pushed aside his chair, and cried:

"It is coming! The pigeon! By Roland, my fore man, there it comes!"

This was the first time that Wilhelm had heard from the boy's lips his father's exclamation. He must have been greatly excited, and, indeed, he had

not been mistaken, for the speck that his keen eye had perceived was no longer a speck but a longish something—a bird—the pigeon!

Wilhelm seized the flag that stood on the balcony, and waved it as joyously as ever conqueror waved his banner after a hard-won fight. There came the pigeon: he lighted, slipped into the cote, and a few moments later the musician appeared with a tiny missive.

"To the magistrates!" cried Wilhelm. "Take it to your husband at once. Oh, dear lady, dear lady, finish what the pigeon has begun. Thank God! thank God! they are already at the Nord-Aa. It will save the poor people from despair. And one thing more: you shall have the pigeon, but take this grain too; a broth of barley will be the best medicine for Barbara; I have tried it."

When it had grown dark and the musician had communicated the joyful tidings to his parents, he gave orders that the blue pigeon with the white breast should be caught. "Put an end to it outside," he begged. "I cannot look on and see it done."

Andreas soon came back with the headless pigeon. His lips were bloody and Wilhelm knew from what, but he did not reprove the starving lad.

Early the following morning, a second pigeon returned. The letters that the winged messengers had brought were read aloud from the window of the Rathhaus, and the courage of the people, pressed to the extreme limit of endurance, revived anew and helped them to bear the worst. One of the letters was addressed to the magistrates, the other to Janus Dousa; they sounded confident and hopeful. The prince—the dauntless champion of liberty, the friend and leader of the people—the prince was well again

and had visited the ships and troops destined for the relief of Leyden. Relief was so near, but the northeast wind would not change and the water did not rise. Upon the citadel and other elevated places stood burghers, soldiers, councilors, and women, in great numbers, gazing into the distance.

Thousands of hands were raised in passionate supplication and all eyes were turned with feverish expectancy toward the south, but the waters did not advance; and, as if in scorn, the sun burst joyfully through the mists of the autumn morning, imparted a pleasant warmth to the keen air, and sank to rest, at last, in radiant splendor, shooting out its golden rays far and wide. The cloudless blue of the heavens arched serenely and pitilessly above the city and decked itself at night with myriads of glittering stars. Early on the morning of the twenty-ninth, the fog thickened, the grass remained dry, the mists rose, the fresh air grew sultry, and the gray clouds piled one upon another and turned to a somber black. Then a light breeze sprang up and played in the leafless branches, then a sudden gust of wind passed over the heads of the watching multitude. It was followed by a second and a third, and then, without pause or interruption, a shrieking tempest howled through the city, swept the tiles from the roofs, bent the fruit trees in the gardens and the young elms and lindens on many a street, tore down the flags that the boys had planted upon the walls in defiance of the Spaniards, lashed the calm waters of the city moat and the quietly flowing canals, and—God does not forsake his own—the weather-vanes turned, the storm came from the northwest, and—no one saw it, but the sailors shouted it aloud and every man echoed it exultingly and carried it further—the hurricane drove the tossing waters of the sea into the mouth of the

Meuse, and, with fierce assault, forced back the river until it overflowed its banks and hunted it through the dykes opened for its reception and the gates of the sluices, and drove forward upon the towering crests of the waters the rescuing ships.

Fall, rain; roar, storm; rage, waves, and destroy the meadows, swallow up the houses and villages! On the walls and towers of Leyden thousands and thousands of burghers hail your approach. They see in you the terrible armies of the avenging God and welcome you with shouts of exultation.

For two successive days, the burgomaster—with Maria and Adrian, the Van der Does and Van Houts—stationed himself, with brief intervals of rest, in the midst of the crowds on the top of the citadel or on the tower at the Kuhthor, and even Barbara, who had been revived by hope much more than by the barley broth and the lean pigeon, could not be kept at home, but dragged herself up to the musician's lookout, for every one wished to see how the waters advanced, how the earth grew soft, and the moisture crept through the blades of grass and formed into pools, ponds, and at last a broad expanse upon which bubbles were formed by the descending rain and spread into ever-widening circles. Every one wished to see how the Spaniards ran hither and thither like sheep pursued by a wolf. All wished to hear the thunder of the Beggars' cannon, the rattle of their arquebuses and muskets; and men and women seemed to find the storm that threatened to blow them from the walls more pleasant than the mildest zephyr, and preferred the pouring rain that drenched them to the skin to the glittering dew of a spring morning.

Behind the strong fortification of Lammen, which was defended by several hundred Spanish soldiers, and Schloss Kronenstein, a sharp eye could distinguish the ships of the Beggars.

On Thursday and Friday Wilhelm had looked in vain for a pigeon, but on Saturday his best flyer returned. It brought a letter from Admiral Boisot, who called upon the armed forces of the city to attempt a sally on Friday and make an attack upon Lammen.

The storm had blown the bird out of its course. It had reached the city too late, but on Saturday evening Janus Dousa and Captain van der Laen bestirred themselves. Every man who could carry a musket was ordered to appear early Sunday morning. Poor, pale, emaciated troops they were to whom the leaders' orders were issued, but no one thought of failing; every man was ready to lay down his life for the city and his dear ones.

The storm had subsided, the firing had ceased, and the night was dark and sultry. Few cared to close their eyes, and those who were overpowered for a time by sleep were roused and terrified by mysterious sounds. Wilhelm sat in his watch-tower, looking toward the south. Now a feeble gust of wind moaned about the tall house, now a call, a cry, a trumpet peal sounded through the silence of the night; then came a crash in the vicinity of the Kuhthor, as though an earthquake had shaken a part of the city to its foundations. There was not a star to be seen in the sky, but in the direction of Lammen glowing points of light, like will-o'-the-wisps, were seen moving through the deep gloom.

In the early morning it was found that a portion of the city wall near the Kuhthor had fallen in, and such rejoicing as had never been heard before arose near the breach that was no longer dangerous, and the joyous outcries spread through every street and alley, and drew from the houses men and women, old and young, sick and well, who crowded

to the Kuhthor, from whence the Beggar fleet could be seen approaching. The city carpenter, Thomassohn, and other men tore from the water the piles with which the Spaniards had sought to obstruct the "Vliet," and then the first ship and a second and a third drew up to the walls. Fierce, bearded men with grim, scarred, sunburnt faces, whose cheeks had for years felt no salty moisture other than the water of the sea, smiled at the burghers and tossed them one loaf of bread after another and many good things that had long been denied them, and wept and sobbed like children, while the poor people ate and ate, and could find no word of thanks. Then came the leaders; Admiral Boisot embraced Van der Does and Van der Werff; and the Beggar Captain van Duijkenburg was clasped in the arms of Barbara, his mother, and many a Leydener fell upon the neck of a rescuer whom he had never set eyes on before. Many were the tears that fell, thousands of hearts overflowed, and the Sunday bells sounded clearer and purer than ever before, as they called to prayer the rescuers and the rescued. The spacious church was too small that day, and when preacher Cornelissohn, who took the place of the noble Verstroot, who had been taken ill in caring for so many sick, bade the devout congregation to offer up thanks, they had long forestalled his exhortation; since the first note of the organ the thousands who filled the church had been animated by the same fervent longing to give expression to their gratitude.

Father Damianus also returned thanks to God in the chapel of the Gray Nuns, and, with him, Nicolas van Wibisma and other Catholics to whom freedom and the fatherland were dear.

When church was over, Adrian, at the head of his companions, his shoes in one hand and a piece

of bread in the other, waded through the submerged, high-lying meadows to Leyderdorp to look at the Spaniards' deserted camp. There stood the proud tent of the commander-in-chief, Valdez. Above the general's cot hung a map of the Rhine countries which the Netherlander Beeldsnidger had drawn for Valdez, to the injury of his own people. The boys were looking at it, when a Beggar, who had once sat in a counting-room, but now looked like a sea bear, placed himself before the map and said:

"Look, boys. There is the land-scheiding. We pierced that first, but that was only the beginning. There was a tiresome delay at the Grünen Weg,* and here at the third dyke—the Vorweg they call it—we found a hard nut to crack and further progress was impossible. So back we went again in a great circle across the Sagwaert Weg and through this canal where we had a bad time of it, to the Nord-Aa. The Zoetermeer Lake lay behind us now, but the water was too shallow—we could go no further. Have you seen the great 'Ark of Delft?' It is a huge vessel and is moved by paddle wheels instead of oars. You will like to see it. At last the Lord sent the tempest and the spring tide, and the ships had all the water they needed. We had another hot fight at the Kerklaen,† but day before yesterday we reached Lammen. Many a brave man had already fallen, but at Lammen we expected to have the first real struggle. We meant to storm it early this morning, but as day dawned all was strangely quiet in the place and an unnatural stillness prevailed everywhere. Leyden has fallen, was our first thought. Starvation has conquered her. But no such thing! You are made of good stuff! And then a lad about as big

* Green Way. † Kirk Way.

as one of you came to our ship and said he had seen in the night a long procession of lights come out of the fort and move away. We would not believe him at first, but the boy was right. The water had proved too much for the rats, and the lights that the boy had seen were the slow matches of the Spaniards. Look, boys, there is Lammen. . . ."

Here Adrian, who with his companions had gone closer to the map, interrupted the Beggar with a loud burst of laughter.

"What is it, curly head?" asked the man.

"Look, look!" cried the boy. "The great commander-in-chief has immortalized himself here, and here is his name, too. Listen, listen! The rector would hang the placard with the word 'donkey' round his neck, for here he has written: '*Castelli parvi!*' '*Vale civitas, valete Castelli parvi; relicti estis propter aquam et non per vim inimicorum!*' Oh, what a blockhead! '*Castelli parvi!*'"

"What does it mean?" asked the Beggar.

"Farewell, Leyden, farewell, ye little '*Castelli*,' thou art abandoned because of the waters and not because of the strength of the enemy. '*Parvi Castelli*.' I must tell mother that."

On Monday, William of Orange came to Leyden and made his headquarters at the house of Herr van Montfort. The people received their "Father William" with rejoicings, and amidst the joy and happiness that surrounded him this untiring champion of Holland's liberty was active in securing the future welfare of the city. Later on he rewarded the faithful endurance of her burghers with a magnificent memorial—the University of Leyden. It awakened and kept alive in the busy city, and the country that for long years had bled under cruel wars, that spirit whose lofty aims and aspirations

are its own reward, and which places eternal welfare far above worldly prosperity. The tree whose seed was sown amidst the deepest suffering, amidst conflict and oppression, has borne for mankind the noblest fruits, and, God willing, will bear them for centuries to come.

. . . . . .

On the twenty-sixth of July, 1581, seven years after the deliverance of Leyden, Holland and Zealand, whose political independence had already been assured, declared themselves at the Hague independent of Spain. William of Orange had hitherto ruled as stadtholder of King Philip and had waged war against him in the king's own name. Even the charter of the university, a document which, drawn up as it was in all seriousness, deserves to be called an unequaled masterpiece of the subtlest political irony, the Prince of Orange attributed to King Philip; and it is delightful to read that the somber ignoramus in the Escurial, after ripely deliberating with his dear and faithful cousin, William of Orange, had resolved to erect a free "public school and university" for reasons which to the king could not but appear detestable.

On the twenty-fourth of July, this farce was brought to an end and Philip was deposed. The prince assumed the sovereign power.

Three days later this glad event was celebrated in the Van der Werff household by a splendid banquet.

The windows of the dining-room were thrown wide open and the breezes of the summer night fanned the faces of the guests who were assembled about the burgomaster's table. They were the most intimate friends of the family: Janus Dousa,

Van Hout, the learned Doctor Grotius of Delft—who to Maria's joy had been summoned to Leyden as professor, and who this year filled the position of rector of the university—the scholarly innkeeper Aquanus, Doctor Bontius, now professor of medicine at the university, and others.

The musician, Wilhelm, was also there, but he was not alone; at his side sat his beautiful wife, Anna d'Avila, with whom he had just returned from Italy. For some years he had been called Van Duivenbode (messenger dove), for the city had honored him with this noble name, and with a coat of arms which bore three blue pigeons and two crossed keys upon a silver field.

With the prince's consent, old Fräulein van Hoogstraten's bequests to her relatives and servants had been recognized and Wilhelm and his wife were now living in a handsome new house, where a dove cote was not lacking and where Maria, although her four children left her little time, took part in many a madrigal. Adrian, grown to a fine young man who had completed his studies at the new university and was soon to be received into the council, had many questions to ask Wilhelm about Rome and his sister-in-law, Henrika. Belotti had gone with the latter, after the death of her father who had received Anna and forgiven her, to Italy, and she was living there as the head of a secular order where music was cultivated with special devotion.

Barbara did not appear among the guests. She had plenty to do in the kitchen. Her cap was now fluted with almost coquettish care, and the assured and contented way in which she ruled over Trautchen and the two other maids showed that in Peter's household and business, all was going as it should. It was worth while making a special effort for such

guests. Jonker van Warmond was also among them, and the place of honor between the rector and Janus Dousa, who was now first curator of the university, was reserved for him, for he had become a great man and an influential statesman; and had with difficulty found time to leave the Hague with his young colleague, Nicolas van Wibisma, to be present at the banquet. Cheerful and merry as ever, he drank to Meister Aquanus and cried:

"To old times and to our friend Georg von Dornburg!"

"With all my heart!" answered the innkeeper. "It is long since we have heard of his daring deeds and adventures."

"It is quite natural! The fermenting wine has grown clear. Dornburg has entered the English service again, and, a month ago, I met him in London, a member of her majesty's Admiralty. His squadron is now on the way to Venice. He still thinks fondly of Leyden and he bade me carry affectionate remembrances to you all. But you would not recognize our former favorite in the quiet, cheerful man and dignified commander. How often his extravagant spirits used to carry him beyond us all, and then how it made one's heart ache to see him brooding over some secret grief!"

"I saw Jonker von Dornburg in Delft," said Rector Grotius. "Such enthusiastic natures often soar too high and come to grief, but when they bow to the yoke of duty they can move great weights and overcome the greatest obstacles with cheerful ease."

In the meantime Adrian had risen at a sign from his father, and filled the glasses with the choicest wine. The "hoch" which the burgomaster raised was to the prince's health, and Janus Dousa followed it with a second to the freedom and independence of the Fatherland.

Van Hout dedicated a glass to the days of suffering and to the wonderful rescue of the city.

Every one pledged him heartily, and when the "hoch" had died away Aquanus said:

"Who can help thinking with delight of that beautiful Sunday, the third of October? But when I think of all the misery that preceded it, my heart aches even to this day."

At these words Peter took Maria's hand, and pressing it tenderly, whispered:

"And yet, on the saddest day of my life, I found my dearest treasure."

"And I too," she answered, looking gratefully into his faithful eyes.

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